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THE CLAIMS
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
CONSIDERED;

BEING THE CLOSE OF A CORRESPONDENCE
BETWEEN

THE REV. JAMES KELLY,
Of Stillogan, Ireland,

AND

J. N. DARBY.

LONDON:

W. H. BROOM, 34, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1864.

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James Kelly
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INTRODUCTION.

THE only thing necessary to be explained in the publication of the following correspondence, is the fact of its having been published after so considerable a lapse of time. It will be seen by the correspondence itself, that one of the parties declined pursuing it farther.* The other disliking contention, and weary of it, much preferring direct edification, had this additional motive for not taking any positive step—namely, an unwillingness, unless by what was identified with direct edification, to raise questions in public on what had the reputation of Protestant truth, in the presence of error, which lifted up its head high enough.

Some brethren in Christ who had seen the MSS. of the correspondence, urged by the actual state of things in England, desired particularly the publication of the last letter, adding the last of Mr. Kelly's,† that it might be understood, or of all if that were demanded. Under the circumstances, he wrote to Mr. Kelly, acquainting him with what has just been mentioned, and asking permission to satisfy the wish expressed of publishing the two last letters. At first Mr. Kelly required the publication of the previous part of the correspondence, which was acquiesced in, as indeed the other party was naturally bound thereto if demanded; but in a subsequent letter Mr. Kelly declared his mind changed in this respect, and acquiesced in the publication demanded, the following communication being annexed.

* An additional letter has since been sent, which is added at the request of Mr. Kelly.

† Now the last but one.

TO THE REV. J. DARBY.

Stillogan Glebe, Dublin,

Jan. 28th, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,

In reply to your letter from Lausanne, which has just reached me, I hasten to say that since our last correspondence I inquired after you several times as to whether you had returned to this country, with a view formally to decline pursuing the subject of controversy between us any further; but hearing you were still abroad, I did not think the matter of sufficient importance to communicate with you by a foreign post. I now avail myself of this opportunity to let you know my decision. The grounds on which I have come to it are these: First, the inutility (in many of my respected brethren's estimation) of disputing with you. Second, the accession of care and occupation connected with my appointment to this parish, which I was led to reflect afforded more profitable exercise of my little talents than carrying on a discussion with the leader of an extravagant class of schismatics. Third, the little hope I entertained after reading your most diffuse and incoherent reply to mine of February 8th, 1839, of being able to bring you to the real point at issue between us.

As to the publication of the letters to which you allude, I can have no objection if you see fit, although I must confess I do not attach to them the importance

which you do. I have only to request that you will annex to them the following observations by way of explanation of some passages in my letter which you have misunderstood, and of final comment on some sentiments of your own.

I remain, my dear sir,

Yours in Christian truth and love,

JAMES KELLY.

The observations themselves, alluded to in this letter of Mr. Kelly, are placed at the end, as coming then naturally in their place after the letter on which they comment.

With this brief introduction, acquiesced in by both parties, as to what has led to the publication of them, these letters are now submitted to the reader, with the desire that the Lord may use them for the establishment of truth, the strengthening of souls in it, and the refutation of error.

THE LETTERS.

TO THE REV. J. DARBY.

Liverpool, Feb. 8, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,

Though I might recount many other adequate causes of my silence since I received your last, yet I must say my chief reason for not being more prompt has arisen from the very uninteresting reply you have given to mine of December 12. It really appeared to me *evasive of discussion*. I asked you, in order that we might come to the argument of the subject at once, to allege your grounds of separation from the communion of the Church of England—a very straightforward question methinks, and the import of which was very obvious. But instead of a plain answer, as might have been expected, you occupy a considerable portion of your letter in making reflections on me as “an adversary,” as you call me, of whom you add “nothing” (Christian I suppose you mean) “is to be expected.” You then quarrel with my assuming that you have forsaken the Church of England, as though this was not the case (remember, I did not say *the Church*, but *the Church of England*); and, lastly, you give out

your impressions against the character of the Church of England, erecting them into assertions, and dilating upon a new and better way, as you are pleased to think—adding in the meanwhile not one syllable, not even professing to do it, of argument to bear out your assertions. Now, my dear sir, I feel from this, as well as the loose character of your former communications to me, that it is vain to expect from you anything like an orderly and intelligible vindication of your views; in this respect you seem to write as you speak. I therefore propose for the future, without waiting for such, taking up just as they come your aspersions of the Church of England, and the peculiarities of yourself and brethren as dissenters, sifting them as the Lord may enable me, and bringing out the truth as distinctly as I can, for the perusal of all who may see our correspondence.

First, then, you say that the world is in the Church of England. What do you mean by “the world”? Is it the openly profane and ungodly? This we deny: the Church recognizes as her members only those who are baptized into and make a solemn profession of “the truth as it is in Jesus,” and all those who scandalize their profession by evil lives, are, by the discipline of the Church, to be excluded from her communion. Do you mean earthly-minded professors? In sorrow we assent to the sorrowful truth of this. St. Paul wept over such in the Philippian Church, and the same, we have reason to believe, abounded in the Church of Corinth. There never has been, and there is nowhere upon earth a pure Church in the sense of excluding false, worldly-minded professors. Or do you say that the constitution of our Church, looking at our articles and formularies, is worldly? This I deny, and call upon you to prove the statement if you make it.

Worldly professors, then, being in the Church of England, which is all the amount of meaning that your charge has in it, what is the duty of God's children who are also within her pale? This is the fundamental point of difference between us; this is the question which, troubling the consciences of our dear people, gave you the occasion—which, alas! you have industriously improved—to separate them from us. You hold and teach that it is imperative on the faithful to come out from the communion in which are the unfaithful. To use your own words, they are “to cease from the evil;” to more than this, in the first instance, it appears you do not aspire. Mr. Hargrove says, “Do you see the evil? then cease from it; let that be your first step,—God will show you the next when you have taken that.” In other words, we are to take a leap in the dark from the Established Church, not knowing where we shall land, nor why this course. Is there no evil bound up in the body of flesh which you carry about with you? is it not even hindering the regenerate spirit, lusting against it, “a vile body,” as the Scriptures call it, and to continue to the last? And yet you do not recommend the withdrawal of ourselves from the body, *i. e.*, suicide—that be far from you; but why not, according to your principle above laid down? are we not afflicted with an evil companionship, so that by reason of it we often “cannot do the things that we would”?

To such a proposal as this, of course you justly reply, The word of God says we are to bear this conflict between the flesh and spirit, wrestling with the former, though in the flesh not walking according to it, which, so long as we attend to, we are told it is no more we that do the evil, but “the sin that dwelleth in us.” Precisely similar, then, is what the

Scriptures say in the case you put of Christians being in a Church in which there is worldliness. Look at the declension on the part of the Jewish Church throughout their history. Behold also the prophets testifying against the evil, *but yet remaining members of that Church*: and if we turn to the New Testament Scriptures, what do we find there? The account of Churches which had become grievously corrupt; even exhortations to the faithful within their pale; *but in no instance separation enjoined*. Take the Churches of Thyatira and Sardis for examples: in the former it appears a false prophetess was allowed to assume to herself a commission from God, and to teach men to commit fornication, and judgment is denounced in consequence. But what is said to the remnant that preserved their allegiance? Is it flee out of her—form yourselves into a new Church? This would be your remedy; but such is not the injunction of Jesus; it is simply, “That which you have already, hold fast till I come” (Rev. ii. 25). As to Sardis, we read there were but “few names left which had not defiled their garments;” but even here there is no recommendation to separate (Quere—Is not this the secret why you and your party deny the Church of England to be a Church at all, to get rid of such passages as these?). We *do* find separatists indeed spoken of elsewhere (Jude 13); but it is in a bad connexion—in company with “murmurers, complainers, and mockers”—the inscription over whom is “sensual, having not the Spirit.” I can readily conceive separation to be the *easy* course to take—easy to flesh and blood; just as in the degenerate Christian family, for the member who walks close with God, and is anxious that all the domestic arrangements should be characterized by the spirit as well as the form of

religion—for him to withdraw himself from the sphere in which his bearing and long-suffering tenderness, alternately with his faithfulness, is exercised, and either live by himself in solitary communion with God, or unite with more kindred spirits, —all this would be *comparative enjoyment*, but then it would be a *selfish* enjoyment; it would be a pleasing of himself—a “looking on *his own* things, not on the things of others.” He has left the family circle which he should have dearly loved; in which, as it was his duty, so God might have made it his privilege, to witness for His truth, and promote a revival of the power of vital godliness. Of course, if there were rules laid down for the regulation of the family, or doctrines professed by them at their family altar, at variance with the word of God, separation would be lawful, though even then it should be resorted to only after the most patient zeal in striving to effect a reformation. But I have supposed the family only to have declined in spirit, and that their professed reverence for, and outward observance of piety still existed; and under these circumstances it is plain that the rending the unity of the domestic circle would be quite inexcusable. Though separation might spare the individual in question many an exercise of his grace, yet it would be wrong.

Now this, I conceive, aptly represents the case of the Church of England and you separatists. There has been a lamentable degeneracy among us, though, praised be the Lord, a considerable alteration for the better is taking place. But as a Church we profess God’s truth, which, handed down to us in our venerable formularies from apostles and martyrs who have gone before us, we have neither added to nor taken from. The deposit of Christian doctrines is with us as a Church, and our people (however

wayward they may walk) *yet profess adherence to it.* But how have you separatists acted? Instead of resting the lever of your brotherly love and Christian devotedness upon this important fulcrum of the Church's still faithful profession, and bending all your energies to effect a revival in the family, you have selfishly withdrawn yourselves from us, and, aggravating the degeneracy in which you should have sympathized as members of the body, have contemptuously left us under God's judicial sentence,—“unnatural sons,” says Bishop Hall, “that spit in the face of the father that begot them, and the mother that bore them.”

Thus, my dear sir (I trust speaking the truth in love), I have alleged *selfishness* of conduct against you and your party; may it not be possible, I would add, that there attaches *pride* to your procedure also? We know how insensibly it works;—“a sin,” as some one observes, “that rises from the ashes of other sins,”—mingled among a company whose title, many of them, to the Christian character is almost defaced, except to the eye of charity which “hopes all things,” the shining graces of individuals are obscured; but when they come out and stand apart in a little body by themselves, ah! then they attract notice. While they remain in the Church, “serving the Lord with humility, supporting the weak, comforting the feeble-minded, restoring the offender in the spirit of meekness,” Christians are like the convalescent patients we sometimes see in an hospital tending their fellow-sufferers; but these persons, we can imagine, might get impatient of their charitable office, and, revelling in the consciousness of strength themselves, might not brook being confounded longer with the diseased and dying, and so depart from the asylum that had been so blessed to themselves. Alas, my dear sir,

while I write it, the apprehension of something similar having to do with the course you are pursuing, and persuading others to, *growingly presses on me*. I do not say this is the case, and I heartily pray it *may not be* the case with any of you; but you must see how incident the evil is to the procedure you have adopted; and as one who is in the flesh himself, I cannot but remark it. Would to God the people who have gone out from us would reflect upon this. They felt the cross of having to witness for Jesus, and keep their garments in the midst of declension and inconsistencies around them, which was the school for them, and they were thriving in it; but, alas, they forgot that this might be the case; and enamoured of the prospect of purer communion (apart from the embarrassing presence of the worldly), and of the conspicuous position they would then stand in, they embarked in the enterprise of *dissent*. They know, perhaps with bitter disappointment, the result—that while the tares are *more like wheat*, they are bound up with them still, *only closer than before*; and that the liberty of ministry which you have among you is a sorry substitute for the solemn responsibility of office in securing edification. Would to God, I say, that with the experience to which I know some, not unlike your party, have been brought, you would all “search and try your ways,” and see if the flesh, with its ten thousand labyrinths, has not betrayed you into your present position.

Having thus briefly vindicated the Church of England against your sweeping accusation of being a worldly system; shown—and that even when there has a tide of corruption set in upon a Church—*separation is contrary to the mind of God*; and having suggested some dangerous motives which *may be* operating upon you, I come to analyze for a moment your

improvement, as you think, upon ordinary dissent—for you must know I cannot suffer you to disclaim altogether affinity with common dissenters—the only difference I see between you and them is that, according to the genius of the day, *you* are more latitudinarian. Until your views came out, it was thought that the dissenting bodies in this country had become grievously lax in their principles in order to effect unity: the followers of John Owen, for instance, changing pulpits with the followers of John Wesley—each party for the time being keeping in abeyance those doctrines which were obnoxious to the other. Even the heterogeneous materials of *Calvinism*, *Socinianism*, and *Poperly* appeared not long ago combined on the subject of political agitation; and at this moment, in the national system of education for poor Ireland, we see the sad spectacle of representatives of these several classes sitting in conclave to determine how much of what each maintains to be truth is to be sacrificed at the shrine of the popular idol *unity*. I, for my part, did not think that latitudinarianism could go beyond this; but you and your brethren have found out a still more comprehensive ground of union: you propose to unite all classes, not by the old-fashioned way of endeavouring to banish “erroneous and strange doctrines”—the fruitful parent of strife—but by *cushioning* them, and inscribing upon your standard only one or two articles of faith as essential: and really while I admit this, that you have set your seal as a body to *any* truth, I do not know that I am altogether right, for where is your confession of faith to be found? If you say in the written word—well, the Socinian professes to find *his* there too,—is he therefore admissible to your communion? I believe not; how then do you exclude him, since you have no defined standard of truth?

Why it is by using a standard stealthily and in private, *by secretly defining what is truth*. You have your touchstone of error in each of your breasts; the leaders among you appeal to it as occasion requires, and thus the Socinian is excluded; but, by the way, *where is the security for your continuing to exclude him?* That touchstone of unrecorded opinions within you may change, so that the sentiments which are not congenial to you to-day may become so to-morrow. Not to diverge, however, from the point—you *do* exclude the Socinian, though in an unsatisfactory way: do you exclude any others?—Roman Catholics. How do I know this? Pascal and Fenelon—and doubtless they have their successors in our day—would be as devotional as any of you in speaking of and extolling Jesus;—if you have no other test than this, why the wafer idolaters may come among you, and be called brethren. If indeed you have your mental touchstone to apply to their views, you are free, I will suppose, from the intrusion of both these obnoxious classes, though I leave it to you to show your *consistency* in recognizing what is truth in *their* cases, and then stopping short. Do you not see, my dear sir, that at the very point your recognition of truth ends, there your admission of error begins? *and here is your latitudinarianism*. Let men but profess their belief, as your phrase is, “in the blood,” and then, whatever be their heterodoxy, they are admissible among you—Baptists and Pædobaptists, Arminians and Calvinists, Millennarians and Anti-millennarians, Quakers, &c. Your cords of union are indeed lengthened, but, alas, how superficial the truth they circumscribe! The ordinance of baptism, though a command, cannot be administered among you; the doctrine of God’s electing love, the second advent, the agency of the Spirit in the Church, cannot be introduced at your

meetings, forsooth, because the moment you touch upon these topics *your boasted unity is at an end*. Doubtless it has happened because of the paucity of your numbers, and their select character, being chiefly from the one communion, that you have had somewhat more of liberty than I have described as the tendency of your system (though, by the way, I saw myself the elements of discord working among you at Clifton); but according, I repeat, to your latitudinarian principle, coming together only as believers in the atonement, this *liberty* you have had does not legitimately belong to you. Just as in the national system of education, when the teacher goes beyond the *books of extracts* he transgresses the rule, so when in your assemblies for worship you touch on ground *other than what is common to you as Christians of all denominations*, you violate your principles. The only way you can fairly get out of this bondage is by determining your views of doctrine, and authoritatively setting them forth; *then* indeed your ranks will not present so party-coloured and motley a group, but they will be sadly thinned; and if you have not your Thirty-nine Articles, like the Church of England, which you affect to despise, yet will you have some "*Shibboleth*" which will get you the character you are now giving others. You see how involved you are in a dilemma: either you meet on the common ground of one or two truths, and then you cannot go beyond them in your teaching, or you have a regular system of doctrine, conformity to which is expected, and then you are inconsistent, for you repudiate all confessions and creeds.

But now to another subject. You say that the Holy Ghost is not honoured in the constitution of our Church. Your letter does not explain where the hindrance lies; I guess, however, what you mean,

from your addresses which I have heard, and your brethren's publications: it is because, it seems, we admit an ordained ministry among us, *i.e.*, by ordination we give authority in the Church to those whom we believe endued with the necessary gifts, and called by the Holy Ghost. Mark, we do not arrogate to ourselves in the first instance, as our liturgy testifies, the selection of our ministers; but those who appear by their solemn profession and examination to be called by the Holy Ghost to take upon them the office, we ordain to it. Why, my dear sir, you do *yourselves* something similar: those who commend themselves to you by their gifts, and as apt to teach, you yield submission to, and they act as pastors among you. I remember, at your late meetings at Clifton, asking Mr. Hargrove how he took upon him to expound Scripture to his assembled brethren one morning, and his answer was to this effect, "You and some two or three others had arranged it previously." You see, then, you *have* authority exercised among you, though in a *covert* way; the difference is, that *we* demand from all candidates for the ministry among us, Do they believe they are moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them the solemn office? and so far as man can go, we see that we are not imposed upon, by requiring that they be persons well reported of, and of competent knowledge in the word of God; whereas *you*, by a sort of *whispering debate* among those who are the *managers* of your party—*irresponsible* persons, determine who are fit to teach, and who not. There is with you no solemn examination of the individual by those who have authority given them in the Church; there is no fasting or prayer previously, to implore the guidance of the Holy Spirit; but just according to the way the individual pleases his hearers, *and it might be by*

sparing their sins, your selection is made; and then it is only for the time being, for you may supersede him on the morrow—and all this most inconsistently, for he may affirm that the Spirit has moved him to *speak* just as confidently as you affirm you are moved by the Spirit to *silence him*. I ask, my dear sir, is God a God of order; and can you say that amidst this confusion the Holy Ghost is honoured among you? To sum up in a few words this part of the matter, *there must be authority used* in the ordering of the Church; and while this is conformable to the general rule laid down in the word, it is as absurd to say that this introduction of it hinders the Spirit, as it would be to contend that the use of types, ink, and paper is officious meddling on our part to preserve the Scriptures, and that it interferes with the agency of the Spirit. Authority, I repeat, must be had recourse to; and we maintain that *ours* is conformable to the general rule laid down in the word of God; but while you have authority among you in a covert way, it is capriciously exercised according to no open acknowledged standard; and thus while our dear people whom you have got among you are taught to flatter themselves that they are free from the yoke of man, you and the other managers of your party are *virtually* their lords; and if your own minds receive an evil impulse, *God knows what mischief you may inflict upon them*; or if you are preserved—and I pray the Lord you may, and, further, be reclaimed from your present schismatic course—*other leaders* may arise among you, men of parts and ambition, who may become the *worst of spiritual despots*.

On the whole, my dear sir, I think I have proved that your system has not originated in obedience to the word of God, and that its tendency is most per-

icious. Here I would be content to close my letter—beseeching the Lord to open your eyes, and the eyes of our dear people who have been decoyed away from us by your *vain*, though, I admit, *sincere* representations—but your letter turns to personal matters, upon which, lest you should be offended if I were silent, I beg to spend a few words.

First.—You reproach me for challenging this discussion; but this I leave. If I were in the strict sense of the term “*the challenger*,” as I said before, it would be only conformable to my ordination vow.

Secondly.—You go back to what transpired at the Clifton meetings; all I shall say to this is, that *I am surprised* at your venturing to allude to the subject, after your shrinking in the manner you have done (I allude to our correspondence) from, on the one hand, the vindication of yourself from the uncharitableness which, on the testimony of your own brother, Hargrove, I alleged against you; or, on the other hand, the honest confession of your fault as a follower of Jesus.

Thirdly.—You do not understand, you say, my regretting that this is not a *viva voce* discussion,—time, manner, and place being left entirely to me. On this I beg to observe that, independent of my unsettled circumstances in the ministry at that time, and which occurred to disturb my original design and wish, and of this you were duly apprised, when I came maturely to reflect upon the novel position I should occupy in going to Hereford, or any other place where your party was, to argue against you, as though my brethren in the ministry stationed there were not fully competent, if they approved of such a course, to enter upon it themselves, I recognized it as providential that the alternative of the press, through which without any indelicacy I could meet

you, was suggested by you instead of the platform. Not but that if, in the providence of God, you or any of your party broaching your schismatical views came within the sphere of labour under my control, I would for a moment hesitate to challenge you to oral discussion. I think it a sad pity when it is a legitimate course to adopt, that my reverend brethren do not pursue it, though, as I told you, a most valued brother said he thought it would be making too much of you.

Fourthly.—With regard to the publication of our correspondence, I shall go as far back as you please. It was really for *your* sake, your first letters were so unchristian and slovenly, as well as that they related to personal matter, that I proposed omitting them; and if you name any medium in England through which the whole correspondence can appear, *I am perfectly content*. I think the *Statesman* would be available for Ireland.

I remain, my dear sir,

Yours in Christian truth and love,

JAMES KELLY.

Stafford, Feb. 26, 1839.

DEAR MR. KELLY,

I am glad we are at last launched in the subject; it is a great relief to my spirit, though not a pleasant task in itself. I received your packet from Dublin in London, I suppose by private hand, and sit down at once to answer it, having ran it over as I came down again here.

Your letter has completely justified to me the ground I took in my last letter to you; satisfactory, if not to you, at least to others, whose minds were anxious on the subject. All your present letter goes on the assumption exactly of what I refused to acknowledge in my last—no attempt being made on your part to prove it. In replying to the question, Why I left the Church of England? I replied, not that the world was in the Church of England, as you say—no such thing at all; but that I found the system I was mixed up with *to be the world, and not the Church of God at all*. That is a very distinct thing from worldly people being in the Church.

I said to you very plainly that your question assumed that the Establishment was *the* or *a* Church, which I did not admit. Now this is a very plain ground; it is to me precisely the ground of importance; and a plain truth which, when once apprehended, frees the conscience of many an anxious person. The position in which you desired to place me is also evident from the expression, you will take up “my aspersions of the Church of England.” I

have no pleasure in casting any aspersions on it; to free my own and others' conscience from all that may be, or tend to evil, I do desire. Further, sir, I have to admit that the *manifested progress of Popery*, of which *the system* of the Church of England is the instrument, renders me less jealous and less anxious to avoid the plain expression of what one may feel painfully, and yet, from ten thousand associations, be unwilling to declare, lest some rude Edomite might suppose for a moment one felt with them. My mind has long admitted its tendency, and I have acted on it. The signs of it are too publicly apparent not to call forth at least some additional warning voice. If mine be so very feeble and despised, as I am sure it is, may the Lord give it truth and affection, and therefore His own force. The Oxford tracts and their prevalence cannot but have drawn your attention, as they have of Bishops, and even newspapers; and recently we have had a very remarkable sign of the times,—the highest ecclesiastical authority in the country pronouncing a definite judgment that prayers for the dead are not inconsistent with the doctrines of the Church of England. You may say this is not right: her godly ministers protest against it. Be it so. They cannot help it; and if they say, we declare it is not right, then is the judgment of God on them, because they will not plainly act on and abide by what is right, and renounce what is wrong. What is the resource from the evil proposed by the *Record*?—An appeal to the Privy Council! What a condition for the Church of GOD to be placed in, that when a heresy comes in, and is sanctioned, its appeal is to the Privy Council to get rid of it! But I allude to this merely as a sign; and whether the Church exculpate herself or not, a sign it is to them that have eyes to see.

I believe, dear sir, this, that at the time of the Reformation two great elements entered into the composition of the Church of England, as it is called : one, the power of the Spirit of GOD in the preached word, which was directed *against* the Church of England, or of Rome in England then subsisting, and which was carried on by a system of irregularities—Latimer, Bernard Gilpin, and a host of others, many whose names are better known in heaven than on earth, preaching and teaching all about the country, without regard to parish or any thing—but which was the power of light against the power of darkness, and that was blest. The other element was partly through the fears of Churchmen, and mainly through the interference of the Crown and secular power—a system in which, in order to maintain unity in the whole country, and that even to conciliate Roman Catholics for political purposes, under Queen Elizabeth, a vast mass of association with Roman Catholic forms and the value of ordinances was preserved and asserted, by which a connexion with the great *apostacy* was kept up; which, although the power of truth and the providence of God may have a long while hindered its effect, is now beginning distinctly and publicly to show itself, and will, I have no doubt—woe is me that I should have to say it—result in this once comparatively happy country being immersed in and given up to darkness and opposition to GOD. Can you suppose, sir, that this gives me satisfaction or pleasure in saying it? The Lord knows who grieves over it most—those who sanction the system that leads to it, or such as in sorrow of heart have gone out without the camp, though bearing his reproach, and in word and work become a witness, however feeble.

A man cannot, while acting in and sanctioning a

system which involves these evils, honestly bear witness against the evils he partakes of and upholds. The whole system is thoroughly woven together. He subscribes his assent and consent to all and every thing contained in it. Satan, under divine permission, has been allowed to force the adoption of all or none; and makes the single sentence, or word, or even form of apparel, as necessary to unity, or to living honestly in the Church, as justification by faith or any thing else. This is the position of a minister of the Establishment: it cannot be denied. Mr. Head, near Exeter, is a public instance lately of the truth of what I say. But though the truth might be preached by individuals, which I do not controvert, the consequence of the preservation of this Popish parochial unity was the entire forfeiture by the Establishment of the title to being a Church at all—not merely by accident, but by its very essence and system. There was a transfer of all the inhabitants of a parish to a Protestant form from a Popish, but no gathering of saints at all. It was matter of legal penalty not to go to church. The parochial centre was there; the minister the law provided was there; the legal right to seats was there; the whole framework of ordinances for the whole parish was there; and, I repeat, there was a legal penalty for not attending. These are matters of historical fact. The whole population, as such, were transferred in geographical divisions to another form of worship, and there was no gathering of the saints, though there was, to a considerable extent, the truth preached.

That was the system of the Church of England, not its abuse. Those who refused to come were termed Popish *recusants*, and dealt with as such; and those whose consciences refused submission were very

extensively subjected to punishment and imprisonment. And this is still the boasted *principle* of the Establishment. The toleration that there is, forced on by the consciences of others, has in nowise altered the principle of the Establishment. Her boast is, that she provides religious instruction for the whole population of the country: the truth of this we may shortly inquire, but it is her boast; but when I begin to seek what is meant by religious instruction, I find this a most deceptive and inadequate statement. Her system, be there instruction or not, be there bad or good, is a system of ordinances by which the whole population are received as Christian, whether they believe or not, and are dealt with as such by her ordinances, with which, according to her directions, they are all bound to comply; so that those who do not are called recusants, dissenters, and schismatics. So that it is really a provision, not for the instruction of all, but for calling all Christians, whether they are so or not. Do I go into a town or country parish, if there should not be any dissenting body, it would be the boast that they were all Church of England people—though a Christian minister within her pale would perhaps avow he was satisfied there was not one who was a Christian, or knew the Lord, amongst them, and would preach to them as entirely unconverted people, and often does so very faithfully.

You say that discipline is to be exercised. In fact, it is not, nor could be scripturally: if it were, it would be merely to make the world decent, not to keep the Church holy; and discipline with unbelievers is merely entirely deceiving the souls of all—the height of confusion and absurdity. My assertion then is, that the Establishment is not, unless in self-assumed responsibility, the Church, or a Church at

all,—is not a body that God owns as such, save for judgment. And yet she treats as schismatics those who separate from her pale.

This short remark sets this clear. If a man left the Church of God, he was out of the manifested body of God's saved people altogether. But farther, if a man at Corinth left the Church of Corinth, he left the Church of God—he left God's assembly. Could that be said of the Church of England? I find no such thing as a national Church in Scripture. Is the Church of England—was it ever God's assembly in England? I read of the Churches of Galatia, which was a province or country—that is, God's assemblies in that country; but the very idea of an assembly of God is lost in the claim and boast of the Establishment.

Now, dear sir, instead of this being an aspersion on the Church of England, it is her boast. In her effort to build new Churches now—may the Lord turn it to blessing by sending the truth into them, for He is sovereign, and not tied to our ways or any but His own—her plea is to keep pace with the *population*, not with the growth and extension of the *Church of God*. Such is the practical evidence of a fact too notorious to require much proof.

If you refer to the Irish canons, I think the sixth (I have but my Bible with me here and a borrowed liturgy), you will find that the parishioners are to go to the sacrament so often, or to be forced by penalty of law. An analogous canon, but not quite so violent in form, but the same in principle, will be found in the English collection. What has been the consequent history? for I may be told that these are obsolete; for when we turn to *facts*, we are told that they are abuses; when we turn to *documents*, we are told they are obsolete. But facts and documents alike

prove that in the principle of the Establishment, "the Church and State are but different aspects of the same body," to use the expression of one of her distinguished defenders. Hence I am relieved from the thought altogether, save in sorrow for the saints in her pale, of leaving the Church of God, when I cease to be of the Establishment. If you are not the Church of God in England—and such a pretence is idle—then, save the importance of avoiding the deceiving myself and others, my having nothing to say to you can be of no sort of consequence. You tell me to remember that you did not say *the Church*. If you are not, as far as England goes, the sooner I have done with what pretends to be, and is not, the better. It seems to me to be an awful thing to pretend to be the Church of England, if you are not the *Church of God there*. Whose Church are you? or what new thing have you introduced?

These are questions which ought to be answered before charges of schism and dissent are launched out so readily against those who cannot form their consciences on the model of a Church which is not the Church of God. How is it schism to leave you, if you are not the Church of God? What is schism? Would it be schism to divide Turks, or to divide Christians from them? Would it be schism to seek the unity of all saints, apart from the world? Were the Establishment blameless, to force a weak Christian's conscience on an indifferent point would be schism. But what do I find in the history of the Establishment? Why that in order to enforce unity, or rather uniformity, and that even in apparel (and that can hardly be necessary for the unity of the Spirit), nearly two thousand of her godly parochial ministers were rejected at once. If it be said, this was by Act of Parliament, not by the act of the Church, I answer,

then have you for secular reasons made yourselves the slaves, the helpless slaves, of whatever the world chooses to impose upon you; and that in the most important point of ecclesiastical discipline. And the unhappy excuse—what a plea for one who is jealous for the actual real maintaining of Christ's honour in the Church!—that the Parliament and King are part of the Church! Who made them its judicial visitors? But even this poor excuse is taken away now, and we have the modern evidence that Roman Catholics, Socinians—in short, the world, can dispose of the whole ecclesiastical arrangements of the country; and a Chancellor of the Exchequer can get up and say he has considered the state of the country, and it can spare ten bishoprics, and they are taken away. This may seem to your minds order; but to us the authority of Christ over His Church seems cast to *the winds* by it, and His honour despised. And I cannot but feel it preferable in ever so lowly and despised circumstances, and that without the camp, in ever so much acknowledged weakness, to wait humbly for the guidance of the Spirit, and the word of God, in the sorrow into which all this worldliness has cast the Church of God.

If I be asked by what authority I do these things, my answer is an appeal to the plain righteousness of the case, and the *refusal* on such a charge as schism to reply to the inquiry whether the Establishment is the Church of God or not, or even give a plain answer whether they consider her baptized children regenerate or not. If I be told as to the Act of Uniformity that it has ceased to be binding, I ask by what authority? Is schism to be permitted by Act of Parliament? When the Act of Uniformity, that great public act of schism, was found politically intolerable, the authority which had tried to force

unity in a worldly way, sanctioned, according to Church notions, schism in a worldly way.

Such is the history of the Church of England. To turn to Scripture or its idea of a Church, no one thing the least like it can be traced in the New Testament, or Old either. When you speak of the world being in the Church, in the sense of it as referred to in Scripture, it could not be in the Establishment. I admit there were false professors—but how was this? While the Church *was in a state* which Scripture *recognized* at all, I read of false brethren coming in unawares: this could not happen in the Establishment. There is nothing for them to come into *unawares*. All, false and true, are bound to go there; and if they preserve a good worldly character, welcome in theory, and without it even in practice. In Scripture I find a *within* and *without*—a direction to judge them that are within. This state of things does not exist in the Establishment. Her aim and boast is to have the whole population *within*. I repeat, there is no pretence of being a *Church* at all. And really, sir, when you deny that the openly profane and ungodly are in the Church of England, in your own sense of it, you make an assertion of a very strange character to those who are familiar with facts. People's consciences must answer this for themselves. Will you allow me to ask you, and beg you to read it over, Is the Communion Service intended for the members of the Church of England, or for those without? for believers or unbelievers? for people under the law or gospel? But I will not suffer myself, in the Lord's mercy, to be led away from great principles. I believe it was meant in honest hatred of sin. I honour this. But on what ground it can be defended by a minister of the Church of England now, it is hard to tell. Were I

to use an *argumentum ad hominem*, I could remind you that, in the homilies, the right use of ecclesiastical discipline is one of the three marks whereby the true Church may be known. How this consists with the Church of England being a true Church, and avowing what it does in the Communion Service, is hard for a simple mind to tell.

You can now pretty well understand why I speak not of the *world being* in the Church of England, but of *its being the world*, and not the *Church* at all. It is notorious that, if they be not actually dissenters, the population of a parish, town, or county, if they be in pitch darkness, are all members of the Church of England, so called. They would call themselves so. They are called so, and boasted of by their ministers as such. They are entitled to be received as such, if not notoriously profligate, though they may not be able to tell you who Jesus was, and deny in their ignorance every truth of the Gospel. And that this is a fact, and not a fiction, is known to every one acquainted with the state of the country: that is, the world behaving themselves so as not to shock public decency, are entitled to be received at communion, because the system rests on ordinances, not on faith. And a minister faithful as to the truth he preached would address the whole congregation in the services of the Church of England as his brethren and as the Church; and when preaching to them, perhaps honestly and faithfully tell them they were all unconverted, and unless they repented they would all perish. In a word, he would address them, when he told his own mind, as faithfully serving Christ in the Spirit, as unbelieving sinners; and when he recited the Church's forms, and told hers, as congregated saints. Which is right? But, first, which is true? Who is the faithful minister (I put

it to your own conscience), the man who in a dark parish, or as to the great body of every parish, preaches the Gospel to them as sinners—poor, lost sinners, or the minister who treats them all as the congregated Church of God? The latter minister, on your own statement, and the clear avowal of the Prayer Book, acts in the mind of the Church of England.

The truth is, you have two irreconcilable elements at work within her pale—truth in the hearts of many of her ministers, and in a feeble measure in her Articles; and a system of old bottles, which cannot bear the new wine of the kingdom. In these times of God's dealings they cannot both go on together.

I say, then, that the constitution is worldly, because she contemplates by her constitution—it is her boast—*the population, not the saints.*

If circumstances have driven many outside her pale, she treats them as dissenters and schismatics, and so do you, and therefore in principle avow and admit the charge. The man who would say that the Church of England is a gathering of saints, must be a very odd man, or a very bold one. The parishioners are bound to attend by her principles. Are they all saints in theory? If you say yes, I answer, then it is not God's theory, and judgment is pronounced on the question.

But there are other points connected with this point, of theory and discipline, which are to me very important.

We are habitually told not to judge, and this sounds well; but it is a very awful and anti-gospel, and at the same time a very hollow principle. True it is that I am not to pass a human judgment on a brother, as regards God's final estimate of him; nor

to say, he being before me as such, as to God's present acceptance of him. This is clear; but to treat all as Christians because they have been baptized in their infancy, and connected with the formularies, is a very uncharitable deception, and you know that as a Christian minister you do not. The system of your Church may do it, but I am persuaded your heart does not. It could not if the Spirit of Christ's love be there, neither then should our acts or words. They forget that Christianity begins with this, "The love of Christ constrains me, because *we thus judge*, that if one died for all, then were all dead." And if a system of ordinances have concealed these truths; if the Church has learnt to rest in the ordinances in lieu of *life* and its necessity; it is just in the practical state of apostacy from which I have to flee, in love to my own soul and that of others.

Next, I believe that the notion that I cannot recognize brethren, as such, is an abominable delusion of Satan, to the destruction of the grand witness of Christ on the earth. I am told not to judge who are and who are not. I answer, the practical recognition of them is the principle of the dispensation. Knowing that all are dead, the recognition that any are alive *is the joy of charity*. Their corporate union and worship is Christ's witness in the earth, "that they may be one, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." And though the disregard of the unity of worship of the saints, known to each other as such, may seem to a carnal man as charity, it really destroys all the first springs of holy affection. What would come of family affections if all were reduced to uncertainty as to who was a brother and who was not? How can I greet with cordial affection as of one heart and one mind my brethren in the Lord, if I do not and am not to know who they are?

Is there not, according to Scripture, to be some set of people who are all of one heart and one mind? Is not charity injured, and God's witness of love from each injured and destroyed by this cold and heartless doctrine, that I am not to judge who are brethren and who are not? Love the brethren, says the Spirit of God. Nay, I am told you must not judge who are and who are not. The first precept of charity is annulled by this system, "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." How can this great witness and test of discipleship be manifested if there be not a mutual recognition by the disciples of the Lord as such? This fair form of worldly charity is, I believe, a very evil delusion of the enemy. And is it not the fact you do judge, you preach to many as unconverted, and you converse with others as saints? You must do so if you have the Spirit of Christ.

Further, as to discipline, there is not otherwise a body capable of discipline as led of the Spirit of God, by which alone it can be rightly exercised. Discipline by a body of unconverted persons is ridiculous. A remark of your friend Mr. M'Neil is an evidence of this. He says, speaking of those who complained of mixed communion, "Have you followed the Scriptures? If your brother has driven you from participating in this ordinance, he has certainly trespassed against you." This is a poor and strained way of taking a brother's trespass against me, and it is besides a piece of sophistry; for my difficulty is not that my brother has trespassed, but that you have by your system gathered a heap of people *who are not brethren at all*, and would reject and scorn the title of saints in heart and life, so that it is a very poor sophistry. But let that pass. "Have you gone to him alone?" says Mr. M'Neil, "then

taken two or three more? and, if that failed, then told it to your minister?" Why "your minister"? because the use of the scriptural direction would have laid bare the inconsistent and absurd position he was in. If he had said, tell it to the Church or assembly, every straightforward person would have seen its absurdity: there was really no Church to tell it to. But to be in a position which obliges one to change the word of God, is just the expression of unwilling consciousness that the word of God condemns my position. It condemns it in the very point at issue between us. Thus holy discipline is destroyed, as well as charity, by the world being called the Church; and "put out from among yourselves that wicked person" is as impracticable as "love the brotherhood." Everybody knows the fact.

Now as to one or two objections you make. First, you refer to Israel. There was abuse, you say, but they were not to leave it. In the first place, we are not Jews, but Christians. Judaism was an elect nation; there could be no such thing as leaving it: Christianity is not, but a gathering of saints. God has not recorded His name in the English nation; but wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, there is Jesus in the midst of them. What the temple was to a Jew, the gathering of the saints is to me. My complaint of the Establishment is that it is not, and never was, a *gathering of saints*. If a man ceased to be a Jew, he ceased to be of God's people altogether. That nation and its ordinances were wholly, solely, and exclusively God's people, sanctuary, and place: to leave them was to apostatize from God. They were gathered, not in spiritual worship, but to carnal ordinances, imposed not *by conversion of heart*, but by Jewish parentage. The

Church of God alone is analogous in one place. The Establishment has no pretence to be what Israel was as God's only place of abode. Where Judaism and Christianity are entirely different from each other in principle, in naturalism, and obligation of carnal ordinances, there it has followed Judaism, and then uses this as an argument why it should not be left. If this argument proves anything, it proves its apostacy. Two or three gathered together in Christ's name has the authority of unity which Israel had of old, not a sorry imitation of that which the Gospel treats as beggarly elements, and now equivalent to idolatry (see Gal. iv.) and carnal ordinances. Israel, I repeat, was a national election; Christianity is not. The laws of the country were God's own laws, the presence of God was there, and the abuses and corruptions did not alter that. A person could not leave it, and be in the place of God's worship and God's ordinance. Now the place of God's worship and God's ordinance is where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, and this the Establishment is not, but a provision of ordinances for the population in confessed imitation of Judaism.

Next you refer to the seven Churches. This there is more occasion to answer specially, as it is the common resort of argument on the question. The simple answer is, they were God's *Churches* or *assemblies* in the place mentioned, and they could not be left; corruptions are no ground for leaving the Church of GOD. The Church of GOD cannot be left, and a man be in the path of salvation in so doing. These were the Churches of GOD—the assemblies of GOD in those different towns—gatherings of saints, although carelessness had introduced corruption. The Establishment is not this at all. Were the Apostle to address an epistle to the Church

of GOD which is at Liverpool, or London, there is no gathered body distinct from the world who could receive and act upon the letter. Where the epistle says, Ye have among you such and such, and calls for repentance, were they not to put them out, or would they otherwise have repented? Where is the body, then, which could act thus, when you are preaching to an indiscriminate heap of unconverted people? In a word, there was a known body which could act by the leading of the Spirit of GOD. There was no direction to leave these Churches, because they were Churches. The Establishment has no such claim, and I do not leave it properly, but have nothing to say to it, because it is not one. The Establishment does not, nor ever did, stand on the ground of these Churches or local assemblies of God at all, and has no principle of their structure, order, or constitution. I should think it a great sin to leave a Church of God because corruptions were found in it; but the Establishment is a great national, secular system, and not the Church of God at all.

Another assertion you make is, I have evil in myself, and that I cannot leave, and therefore it is a hopeless thing to seek purity. This, forgive me for saying it, is an ugly argument. There is no hope: we will continue to do evil. But it is a poor piece of sophistry. I cannot leave the evil in my flesh, so I remain in the body. I can leave the evil around me, so I am to remain in that too. You will admit this is not very strong reasoning. But more plainly, the Lord says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." He does not say, Come out from your body. The Lord says, "If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel made

unto honour, fit for the master's use." I cannot have done with my body, though I may mortify it and treat it as dead, through grace and infinite mercy. The Lord says, "From such withdraw thyself." I cannot from my body. The Lord says, speaking (I believe you will agree with me) of these latter days—days it may be not fully ripened, still they are now the last days—"From such turn away." From my body I cannot turn away. The answer simply then to this is, that the Lord has commanded me to come out and be separate from the world; He has not commanded me to come out of my body. Is your argument really a righteous one in this?

One only remark I believe remains in this part: your objection to ceasing to do evil before we know to do good—taking, as you call it, a leap in the dark. Is it taking a leap in the dark for a Christian ceasing to do known evil, because he does not yet know all the Lord's subsequent will concerning him? Are we to say, I will not act on what I do know, till you tell me all my course on to glory? I have seen the Lord thus continually exercise His children, giving light enough to make a thing a matter of plain Christian obedience, and not show all the happy, and blessed, and full consequences, till faith acted on that. It is just a holy and excellent trial of faith. He says, in principle, I am the door. The mind may say, where to? The Lord answers, *I am the door*: and wherever the soul finds Christ or the will of Christ, it, if walking in faith, trusts that, and the blessing follows. It soon goes in and out, and finds pasture. You seem to forget the praise of Abraham's faith was, He went out, not knowing whither he went. It is better to trust God in doing His will, than the consequences which doing His will may produce, however blessed. Now surely it is of Christ and the

will of Christ to cease from known evil. If you call this taking a leap in the dark, Christ's will—and surely it is His will to leave known evil—is not darkness to us, but light, for which our poor foolish souls are thankful. Nor shall he that followeth Him walk in darkness, though he may only know that in the very next footsteps Christ has gone before him. And if you would know our experience, sir, we have not found it darkness, but blessed light; we have found our own weakness, and the poverty and ruin of the Church; but we have found marvellous and abundant light in the Lord, though light affliction for a moment might accompany it.

As to the Corinthians, though the principle is unaffected by it, it is perfectly plain that *the worst among them* was a Christian, though a fallen one. The habits of the Establishment seem to have confounded decency of morals and deportment with the *very faith* of the Church of GOD. As to the Philippians, that corruption and apostacy were then rapidly flowing in on the Church of God is unquestionable. I do not see that these people were at Philippi, and therefore there is no consequence to be drawn from the passage. With regard to Jude (if you do not believe that we are wandering stars, reserved for the blackness of darkness for ever, ungodly men before ordained to this condemnation, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness), you are not—forgive the saying so—quite honest in quoting it. Do you believe this? But there is a little circumstance in this epistle to which this convenient word “separate themselves” seems to have blinded those who quote it in the Establishment; and this is, that these persons had *crept in*, not gone out. This you will admit is a material point. They were corrupters come into the once pure Church, not saints

gone out. They *feasted* with them. They were spots in their feasts of charity. Your charge against us is that we are *gone out*. Yea, and because we feared to *feed ourselves* without fear where evil was. I think if you examine the word "separate themselves" (*αποδιοριζοντες*) with the context, you will find a very different force in it from that which you attach to the English one, as a convenient placard to the eye, against those whom you condemn—to a well-instructed mind one of no great difficulty.

And why do you say you find separatists in bad company? I read, "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." Do you believe in fact, as an honest man, that these latter characters apply to the greater majority amongst ourselves, or the professed members of the Church of England? And just allow me to ask you also, why you state in the outset that I complain of the world's being in the Church, when you, in speaking of the seven Churches, give a reason why "our party" say the Establishment is no Church at all? All the character you give yourself of alternate tenderness and faithfulness, and our comparative enjoyment by selfishly quitting the family, I pass by; great comparative enjoyment indeed I believe we have had, not in selfishly pleasing ourselves. But the point is, What is God's will? One charge is, that you have called that the family which is not the family at all. And if you have lifted up your eyes and seen the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, and then found yourselves in Sodom vexing your righteous souls, for such I admit there are, you have nothing to boast of in that sort of patience. We prefer the place of Abraham, and give it all up to you, trusting that the Lord will deliver you too; but see no motive to follow your example, or to

associate ourselves with that on which the Lord's judgment is coming—and coming on it you yourself, I bless God, do not deny that it is.

I have now, in reply to the earlier part of your letter, spoken of the great principle on which I rest, as an obedient servant of Christ, in not recognizing the Establishment as the Church. I must now—a much more disagreeable and painful task—refer to the plainer facts of the case, and some of your own documents, showing its working, and how it is mixed up with the canonical principles of the Establishment. I have preferred resting first on the great principle, partly because I am replying to your letter, which does so, and partly because the plea of there being abuses does not enter into the question. The real subject is fairly before us; and effects, what you call abuses, act most directly upon the conscience, and therefore are most material in this question; for all healthful action is action by a conscience led of God's Spirit and the Word. And if, in the whole *arrangements* of a system, there be a constant violation of the laws of Christ and His will and righteousness in the Church, it becomes impossible for a righteous man to act in it or with it. This, I repeat, is a much more painful part of the subject. It is pleasanter far—oh, how much so—to keep the soul in the unsullied regions of Christ's blessedness; and one has to watch one's treacherous heart, lest one should begin to rejoice in iniquity, because it proves one against whom we are contending to be in the wrong; and I feel that one is not fit to speak of evil to another, unless we can bear its burden in sorrow of heart before the Lord, as our own burden in their behalf, at least for those that are saints, beloved of God, the pure and holy One. Controversy tends to destroy estimate, and to make us prove rather than

cover the sins. Still you have compelled me to state the facts, which are plainly inconsistent with God's righteousness in the Church of God.

In the first place, then, pastorships, or what hold their place in the system, are publicly bought and sold, or at least the right to appoint them. At this moment the Corporation livings are on sale. I remember a town where the next presentation to a living was sold to enable the Corporation to build (or pay for) a theatre. I have one now with me copying this, for whom a living was bought as provision for him as a younger son, and he then of course to be brought up at a University for the ministry. But the placards of auctioneers and the advertisements of newspapers are evidence that the pastorships of the Church of England are bought and sold in the market like other property; nay, if I am to believe Mr. M'Neil, they are consequently appointed *because* they are unfit (see his letters on the Church, in a note I think to page 104). Do you think this consistent with the order of the Church of God? You will tell me this is an abuse. Is it not sanctioned by the courts of law, by the ecclesiastical courts, by the institution of the bishops, so that the Church of England treats any one else but the person so holding it as an intruder and *schismatic*? It is the consequence of that organized connexion with the State which makes it the National Church—the Establishment.

There is another thing beside that: some one has a legal secular right so to present, giving secular advantages, and therefore temporally cognizable as a right by the State. It is the horrid price you pay for your specific and formal character. I do not understand how, if all the spiritual and temporal authorities of the system treat as an intruder and a

schismatic any one else than the person so appointed, the appointment can be called an abuse. If you say it is, comparing it with the Church of God as displayed in the word, we are agreed indeed; but then it is in this abuse that the system and order of the Establishment are entirely, and fatally for its character as a Church, at variance with what we find in the word of God. But this is exactly what presses, and justly presses, on the consciences of the Lord's people, and compels them to disown her authority and her state. You may tell me that such or such instances are abuses; but I say that it is just as abhorrent to the principles of the Church of the living God to have a good man or a society buy up livings as to have an infidel do so. Do you think an infidel ought to have the right to present any one to the pastorship of a place? Perhaps indeed by the system of the Establishment there may be no saint there, but by the system of the Establishment it is perfectly competent for him to do so: he may be seized of or purchase the advowson, and the bishop must admit his right, and institute his nominee, and treat all else as schismatics and intruders. You will say his nominee must be a clergyman—be it so; but by reason of the system of national advantage, the bishop is bound to ordain, if there be no legal reason to the contrary: and supposing the clergy to be all faultless, do you think it is the system of the Church of God that an infidel should have the right of choosing the pastor of a place? How would such a system have appeared at Corinth or Ephesus? Is it in *principle*—I do not talk of abuses—the system of the Church of God? But it is the system of the Church of England. Her system is a system of parochial geographical divisions, to which certain legal rights, privileges, and emoluments are attached. This

is her boast as contrasted with what she calls dissent, by reason of which the appointment to these geographical divisions is vested as a right or privilege in some one or another, it matters not who. Now I say this, let it be ever so well ordered, is not the system of the Church of God at all. Mr. M'Neil says this is a disgusting ingenuity of abuse. How is the legal authorized system of the Church as such? I leave the hard words with him; I have only to say if this be the system, it is not the system of the Church of the living God.

And now, sir, will you show me one document or formulary of the Church which says the patronage of livings and other benefices, or the sale of advowsons, is an abuse, or disallowed by the Establishment? If you can, I can only say, to gain the world's advantages you have reduced yourself to an impotency of doing right, and that is no place for a Christian to remain in. Further, I have heard it asserted, as a matter of triumph by evangelical ministers, that there are probably near three thousand evangelical ministers now in England—that is, ministers who, they reckoned, held the Gospel of Christ, and were Christian men. There are, I suppose, about twelve thousand ministers in England, more or less. Now what is the nature of the system which, under plea of providing instruction for all, and charging all not within her pale as schismatics, has, when her state was boasted of as remarkably improved and under blessing, provided that three-fourths of the population should be taught contrary to the Gospel? and that whoever did, under the blessing of God's holy Spirit, go and preach it, these should be denounced as schismatics and intruders?—that three-quarters of the pastors of the Church of God, according to them (if not, avow you are not the Church of God, and cease to

talk of schism and dissent) should not be Christians at all. These are things inexplicable as a state consistent with being the Church of God, to one who has read the word of God, and drawn his ideas therefrom, and not from habit or tradition. Indeed, sir, there are little expressions habitual with ministers of the Establishment which show they are not conversant with the idea of ministering in the Church of God. I read, "our people," "our dear people," and hear, "my flock," and "why do you intrude on my flock?" Who made them your people, or your flock? An apostle would not, nor the Spirit of God, have called them so. He would have spoken of the Lord's people, and the flock of God. How could a servant of Christ, ministering holily in whatever gift God had given him—an Apollos at Corinth, or Priscilla and Aquilla at Ephesus, or anywhere else—have been intruders on the flock of Christ? They were part of it, wherever they were, and to serve in it as able and bound so to do. But all is altered with you. You have not even—forgive the word—the ideas connected with it;—your speech betrays you. And why? because you are a minister, even if true, of such a parish in the Church of England—your flock perhaps not Christian, nor the Church of God at all—not a minister of the Church of God. Again, sir, Who appoints the chief pastors of the Church of England? In fact, the Prime Minister of the day, for any reason perhaps that suits his convenience; the fact is well known, and facts, sir, are important to conscience. The Church of God ought not to be trifled with by theories, while the sheep of Christ are actually scattered. It seems to me to be a very evil sign, when the Spirit is pressed by the actual scattering and wrong done to Christ's sheep, to be told there is such a document which shows the theory of

my system is quite right: these are abuses. The Spirit of Christ cares for the sheep of Christ, dear sir, and not for neglected scraps of paper. But I take the theory, for I wish to avoid resting at all on abuses. The king appoints them. If you tell me there is a *congè d'elire*, Mr. M'Neil shall answer you in the note previously quoted, that the king does really appoint, for by the theory he nominates the person to be so elected. In Ireland they are appointed directly by the king's letters patent. What part of the system of the Church of God is this? And let me here remark, that an appeal to Church of England documents is in many respects a very fallacious mode of judging, for the most material and distinctive characteristics of her system are not found there at all. The work of ordering, governing, and directing the Church is entrusted to persons chosen by the head of the secular authority of the country; and here, again, the whole principle and theory of the Church of God is contravened and set aside, not by the abuses, but by the order of the Establishment. How can I own them as bishops (supposing me a rigid Episcopalian) appointed by God, when I know they have not been in theory so appointed?—that the whole is a mere secular affair? You tell me they must be clergymen, and be thirty years of age. Is every clergyman of thirty competent to be the chief director of the Church of God? Is that God's theory, or is He the endower with needful gifts for His own work? One who believes, then, God to be the author and gatherer of His own Church, and the divine orderer of its government, can find neither the body nor the guidance or order of that Church in the system of the Establishment; and, as Mr. M'Neil justly says, no reform remedies this, while the principle continues. The effects shock the con-

science; the principle is judged by the spiritual mind taught by and formed on the word of God.

Supposing a child of God in a parish where the system of the Church of England has placed a minister who does not know the Gospel, but quite preaches the contrary; and in the communion of the Church there is no one who owns the Gospel on which communion is founded: here are the effects which try the spirit. But the person is bound to abide and hear error taught and souls deceived, and to own as one body, and thereby help to deceive them, those who are entirely unconverted, because by the theory of the Church of England he is Christ's minister and they are the Church. If such a person does not, he is a schismatic and dissenter. Supposing two or three in the same circumstances, and they cease to own them who *by their profession of doctrine* are not believers, as ministers and the Church, and they meet because Christ has said, "wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," they would be set down as wilful schismatics; but according to the word of God, they would be really the Church of God in that place, let them be ever so feeble, and have no minister at all—despised perhaps by those who had thousands to fill their aisles, and the respectability of ecclesiastical associations to clothe their forms, but not of God.

The promise of the Lord outweighs to faith all these charms on the imagination—these goodly stones and gifts; and how strong they are my own heart well knows. I speak not, then, of abuses; but will you say that it is the theory of the Church of God that the King should appoint the chief pastors or bishops of the Church of God by his letters patent; or whether it be the system or principle of the Church of God, or compatible with it, that the ap-

pointment of the pastors should be in Landlords, Corporations, Universities, the Crown, or *whoever may buy them*; and whether you are to be content with the scattering and grieving of Christ's sheep produced by such a system—a system sought to be enforced by the secular arm, to the expulsion of thousands of devoted ministers; and then what is called schism tolerated by Act of Parliament, because the social effects were mischievous—a system which contemplates not *the Church of God*, but *the population*, and secularizes the Church of God, by forcing the population to be all one with it? And let me add this question: Can you, while I do not admit the propriety of staying a day in connexion with such evil in a system, by your own confession *not the Church of God*, can you give the smallest rational hope of the change of the principle and theory from which all the evil flows—that the king nor the landlords, shall not nominate the pastors, nor advowsons sold? Can you say that such a system is the system of the Church of God, according to the word of God? But I have said enough to show the principle on which, in conscience before God, I act, and must disown it as standing before me as the Church of God; and to dispel, I trust, however feeble my thought (and I admit it humbly and sorrowfully before God), the prestige of a sort of hallowed obscurity, soon to merge, I am fully persuaded, in the darkness of Popery, which, perhaps, by its claims and influence, may deliver the nominal Church from the incubus which presses down the Establishment as it is, and satisfy the desires of the Puseyite school—men who, though I believe honest (for I know their views well), are as inconsistent as they are mischievous; for the secular bondage of the Church is a very Babylon in the mind of an honest theoretic

successionist. I would add a little word to them as well as to you, that it is all but perfectly certain that the root of the English succession was an unconsecrated man. I once pursued the point with a good deal of research, and thus by their system they will be easily thrown when it is pressed home, and they ripen a little, into the necessary arms of undisguised Popery. Such is the prospect which your cherished Establishment is engendering for us—not willingly, I freely admit, in the minds of many of her members, but helplessly, because she has tied herself to the car of the State, not to dependence upon GOD ; and wherever its interested or careless wheels roll on, she must go, or cease to be the Establishment. Her efforts, therefore, are to control the State, not to follow God, because she is bound and governed by it—not obedient in freedom and simplicity to Him. “She is my sister, not my wife,” acquired Abraham cattle and Egyptian riches in abundance.

I would now turn to the documents of the Establishment on the two main points connected with the subject I am upon—the constitution and membership of the body, and the ordering of the ministry. I have already referred to the Canons, with which the Rubrics concur, which require the attendance of the parishioners—“every parishioner”—at the Lord’s Supper so often in the year, and treat as recusants and schismatics all absenting themselves or impugning any part of the system. But there is a point which lies deeper than this, and gives not its relative but positive character to the system—those documents which describe its members, those within, not those without, the assumption of which was quite necessary to the other. Now these documents show that the ecclesiastical system of the Establishment is founded on the efficacy of ordinances, not of faith,

and thus is enabled in theory to embrace the whole population, and treat them as Christians, without reference to faith at all; and that any operation of the Spirit of God in the heart, save as communicated by an ordinance, does not come within its scope of instruction, or introduction to full membership. If I am told it cannot judge but by fruits, be it so; but these do not either form any part of the question of membership: a member who is a notorious evil liver, is refused communion in theory, but that is all. First, as you are aware, the child is pronounced regenerate by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it is attempted to say that this is a change of state, not of personal condition. This is an idle effort. Were I told, according to the fathers, regenerate means baptized—though abuse of words produces much mischief if it were merely meant to say they are baptized, and thereby personally admitted into the pale of the visible Church—my present argument would not hold: baptized persons are certainly baptized. But I say this is an idle effort. The congregation are to pray that God will grant to the child that thing which by nature he cannot have; that he may be baptized with the Holy Ghost—an expression itself full of confusion, but certainly something positive, and personally spiritual: again, that he may be sanctified with the Holy Ghost, that he, being delivered from God's wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's Church, and being steadfast in faith, &c.: again, Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he may be born again, and made an heir of everlasting salvation. The congregation are told they have prayed God to release him of his sins, sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, and give him the kingdom of heaven and everlasting life; and Christ, they are told, has promised to grant them: and passing by other consis-

tent expressions, after the rite, it is stated, the child is regenerate; and they pray he may lead the rest of his life accordingly, and then give hearty thanks that it has pleased the Father to regenerate the infant with the Holy Spirit, and to receive him for His own child by adoption. What other terms could you use for a saint quickened by God, and made actual partaker of divine life? The prayer is changed when there has been previous private baptism into "that he being born again—Give that he may be;" and it is then stated that he is by baptism regenerate. In the former service the expression is used, that he may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration: again, confusion of thought as to an infant, but definite in the extent of what is attributed to baptism. The baptism of such as are of *riper* years seems to me to seal the confusion, but that is not the question now to occupy us. In the Catechism the child is taught that he was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and that by baptism; and therein it was *promised he should believe*—the Scripture saying we are children of God by faith, not by ordinances. The child confesses he is bound to believe, and keep God's holy will and commandments, which he will, and thanks God he is in this state of salvation. Now here *faith in certain articles*, and keeping the commandments, are obligations on the child, he being (on the proxies undertaken for him) made a child of God by the baptism itself already, where he assented too unqualifiedly that he would *keep the commandments*. And the promise of faith, afterwards they are stated to *be bound to perform*. The Sacrament also he is taught expressly was the means by which *he received* the inward and spiritual grace (are not these words plain?) of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; and this, anomalous and inconsistent

as it is, is clearly the doctrine of the framers of these services and this system; for the strict sense and definition of a sacrament is declared in the homilies to be, that the forgiveness of sins is *annexed and tied to the visible sign*. It is there said that absolution is not a sacrament, because though there is forgiveness of sins, there is no visible sign instituted by Christ; ordination is not, because though there is a visible sign, there is no forgiveness of sins; and that there are only properly two sacraments, because there are only two where the forgiveness of sins is annexed and tied to the visible sign.

Let me call to your memory that I am not adducing these statements to prove the faults of the Liturgy, but the principle on which the Establishment incorporates the whole population into Christian membership, believing or unbelieving, affirming them to be regenerate by the ordinance, and then making the belief of certain articles incumbent on them on another's promise.

Next, the child is to be brought to be confirmed so soon as it can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and is able to answer the Catechism set forth for that purpose. That Catechism sets forth and has taught him that he is a child of God by baptism already, and acknowledges he is *bound* to believe and to do as has been promised for him—articles which, though of course containing facts of Christianity, tell him nothing really of the way of a sinner's salvation at all, for even in the interpretation he is taught that all mankind are redeemed, and clearly they are not all saved; and he is made to rest on the promises which ruined Israel under Mount Sinai: "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do"—an undertaking which, because of its perfection, works death to the

sinner ; and he is taught the Lord's Prayer. I would remark, in passing, that the instruction as to what he learns in the articles of his belief is objectionable even as articles, because creation is ascribed to the Father only as His act ; and then redemption to God the Son, as if He had no part in creation, but had only a distinct act of redemption as His. But this by-the-bye. The instructions as to duty I have nothing to remark on, save that the knowledge of the Father, as His child should know Him, is nowhere found in the Catechism. In a word, what is properly Christian faith is found in it nowhere, though many topics of Christian truth are referred to.

The Sacraments I have already spoken of, save to note that it is stated that the promises of God are made to them in the sacraments, and whatever articles may be given credence to, *promises* IN A SACRAMENT are the only personal resting-place which is proposed to the child : he is to believe in promises made in that sacrament. This preparation being made, he is to be brought to the bishop, he having there asserted that he is bound to believe, and that he will keep the commandments. It is repeated that they had been regenerated with the Holy Ghost, and been given the forgiveness of all their sins ; and thus after confirmation they are introduced to the Communion, being now in full membership (and why not, if they are regenerate of the Holy Ghost ?), and now confirmed. And all her members are called upon by the Establishment as Christians, as Mr. M'Neil justly agrees, to partake of the Lord's Supper. The very people to whom the same person would preach, as sinners, I believe very faithfully, to repent and turn to God, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that they might be saved.

Thus we have evidence as to the body, how the

population—the parishioners—are fictitiously made the Church; and while individuals may preach the Gospel, the body rests on a system of ordinances which makes the whole body, the whole population, by a fiction preserved to their burial, a body of regenerate Christians. If these services be compared with the system of Popery, and the order of their administration, then not a moment's hesitation can be entertained of what (though doubtless purged of many details) the meaning and principles of them are. Of the fact that the body of communicants are not really Christians, no question is or can honestly be maintained: but the principle of the Establishment being that all parishioners should come, and orderly provision by her previous services being made that they should, it becomes not wrong that they should be there, but their positive fault and sin that they are not: they are bound to come, believers or not; and thus is the principle of the Church of God laid prostrate altogether. And Mr. M'Neil presses it as the first act of obedience, should there have been previous disobedience all the week; and the rule of the Establishment would apply to an infidel who was not a notorious evil liver, and the fiction be kept up by his presence being taken as profession. This then is the principle of the Establishment as to the body: the effect is to scatter the saints of God, grieve and gall their consciences, and then reproach them with dissent and schism.

I am now to refer to the documents, upon which I would only remark as to the former point that all the daily services go on the same principle of all the parishioners being good Christian people. It is vain to allege that a service is to be made, and must be for Christian people. The fact of the Establishment is, that they have made the Christian people for the

service, which is a matter generally left out of sight in their plea for this. Who warranted them in doing this? or what does such a making amount to? A reference to the homilies and canons will abundantly confirm the statement that this is the principle of the Establishment. But to apply myself to the documents as to the ministry, we have seen, as I said, the facts (these are notorious) that the Crown and secular persons and bodies present to livings and bishoprics, and that young men are brought up to them as to a lucrative profession, and that they are bought for that purpose. And you cannot show a single document by which these things can be shown to be an abuse: they are strictly legal by the system of the Establishment. But the two documents I shall refer to are the twenty-third and twenty-sixth articles, which give the authorized form to the ecclesiastical part of it. The first states that those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called by men. Do I quote this wrongly? Here then we get a principle formally laid down which makes *men* the choosers and callers to this work. They have authority given to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard. Now I see the Lord directing the apostles to pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into His harvest, and it was the householder who hired the labourers into the vineyard. It is further stated, that it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office without it. Provision is made for the consequence of this human calling in the twenty-sixth. Sometimes evil men have chief authority in the ministration of the word and sacraments; and though it may be right to see to this, yet if it be not seen to, they minister by Christ's commission and authority, and are to be attended to even in hearing the word of God, though perhaps what they preach is contrary to

all God's truth : and thus, to maintain the authority of the system, and the validity of ordinances where there is no grace, as far as man goes, souls are jeopardated, and the people subjected to all manner of false teaching as of Christ's commission. Do you believe that Christ has really sent a man to preach who is not a Christian, and does not preach the Gospel at all? If not, what is the meaning of Christ's commission? and why this care to maintain the authority of those called and sent by man, even when they are evil, but to maintain the validity of a system of ordinances which rests on man where there is confessedly not the grace of Christ? I may be referred to the Ordination Service, where the person says he is called by the Holy Spirit. Be it so : but there are articles, on the one hand, to hinder any one from acting in that, unless he has man's sanction and authority for doing it; and, on the other, if it be quite false, and the man a pretender, or careless, or a hypocrite, there are articles to maintain his authority, as of equal validity by Christ's commission, as if he really were; otherwise it would be clearly impossible to regard him as the minister of the parish, which by law they must, and treat those as dissenters and schismatics who have been perhaps called by the Holy Ghost, but have not submitted to avow their receiving the Holy Ghost from a bishop, whom the king or his minister has appointed. Do you believe every bishop the king appoints has power to confer the Holy Ghost? If not, surely it is an awful thing to pretend to receive it at his hands. We are told, first, the bishops are securities against any not really ministers intruding, and that we are liable to this evil; and then, where the fact is notorious that the vast body are not ministers, and are absolutely opposed to the Gospel, are not called by the Holy

Ghost, but enter it as a profession, we are told that, they having avowed they are led by the Holy Ghost, through their own hypocrisy and fault, the Church has done all she can. Well, then, the plea of this security is folly—save, observe, to authenticate as ministers; and the only lawful ministers of the place those who are not ministers at all. This is all it does. The call of the Holy Ghost does in itself necessarily remain in the bosom of him who asserts it, but by his ordination the man is authenticated before the truth of his calling by the Holy Ghost is proved.

I have now I believe, dear sir, gone through what the documents of the Establishment present, and her legal authorized proceedings, which do not appear upon the face of her documents, but which are just her form and constitution as an Establishment, in order to judge as to my continuance within her pale as recognizing her as the Church of God. If you avow she is not the Church of God, then I feel no claim upon my soul on her part at all; but your assertion of schism or dissent in not being of her, *assumes a very important character indeed, because it pretends that she is.* The framers of her canons and constitutions who took, if unfounded, very clear and decided ground as to this, were well aware of this, and therefore honestly denounced and excommunicated all who questioned or impugned it. And this is the point you must meet, if you mean to hold the consciences of God's children. That party feeling, early habits, and natural associations, and in many cases personal attachment, may hold a multitude within her pale, I do not question.

I do not think you can charge my letter with aspersions, nor with evading the discussion. The ground I have taken is clear and distinct on which

my mind rests, not without sorrow—I should grieve if it did—but in perfect, joyful, thankful peace of conscience as to the position in which divine mercy and grace has placed me, and a clear though very sorrowful judgment as to the point at issue. Save as to the responsibility which every false assumption casts on the party making it, I cannot own it as "*The Church*," or a Church at all, but as a system by which the saints of God have been and are scattered, and which I firmly believe is the channel of the country into Popery, by the importance it gives to ordinances, and the sanction of that which is in word and not in power, and the hindering the corporate manifestation of the children of God, and their fully following the Light. The providence of God in this, and the judgment which it will close in, though matter of undoubting certainty to my mind, confirming my faith, and, where occasion is given, matter of mine and others' testimony, is not directly the ground of conscience, and to that in direct argument I have here confined myself.

As to selfishness and pride, and the like, as being merely a question of motives, I feel it not to the point to argue them. As to your appeals to our brotherly love to remove the degeneracy of the Church of England, my answer is, I cannot spend my strength on correcting what is in principle wrong,—it is lost labour. It is not degeneracy: it is the system and principle of it as to its incorporation, government, and principle of ministry (though individuals may be good men and Christians who minister), which I believe contrary to the mind, word, and will of God. This was not the case with Israel—the principle and system were God's own there: not the case with Sardis and Thyatira—the principle and system were God's own there too; and therefore

degeneracy claimed service, and not departure; for it would have been departure from the principles of God's gathering and assembly in the two dispensations. By being of the Establishment, I feel I should be in a state of departure from the principles of God's gathering, not by being out of it. Nothing, I think, can be clearer than this distinction.

When you talk of the Establishment being a company whose title to the Christian character is almost defaced save to the eye of charity, I can hardly think you serious. Do not you, do not all real ministers of Christ acting in charity, preach to the mass of them as unconverted and unbelievers? Do you think them uncharitable? I do not. But when you state that the shining graces of individuals are obscured by this company, but that they attract notice when they come out and stand apart in a little body, you just state the grand excellency of doing so; and God's principle of dealing with a poor, ruined, sinnedarkened world. God does not light a candle to put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick: "A city set on a hill cannot be hid." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The method and principle you accuse us of following, then, are God's own, with this precise object. The ascribing of motives to us in acting on it I leave in your own hands.

As to staying in the hospital, it sounds fair, but our objection, dear sir, is to staying in the tombs. You are preaching to them, at least the great mass of them, as dead in sins. Are you not? Certainly in charity and truth you ought to be. Well, we agree with you as to the mass that are in the great broad road; only we do not then come down and join them as brethren actually in the road to glory;

bound to avow that they are heirs of it, in partaking of that one loaf at least three times a year, and assuring them they are children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. An hospital is for a people that are alive.—Is it not? Do you believe that the mass of the Establishment are alive to God? In fact, your statement about the hospital is merely playing on our feelings.

I hardly know how to answer your exhortation to us to search and try our ways. You tell us that we were “thriving in the Establishment;” then, “that though the tares are more like wheat, we are only closer bound to them still;” and “where people not unlike our party have been brought.” I can only say they are all pleasant assumptions or suggestions on your part. We have deeply felt and found our own weakness, and the condition to which the principles of the system of which you form a part have reduced the Church of God. But in this weakness we have found God faithful, and very merciful and gentle with us too; and in spite of our infirmities, enlargement and comfort of heart, and growth and liberty, and ability in some increased measure to feel sympathy, deep and conscious sympathy, for the whole Church of GOD—even for that part of it which is in the Establishment, and a safeguard too, through His mercy, from the many ruinous principles which are flowing in from different quarters, both in the Church of God and in the world. Our own weakness and imperfection I trust we are freely and fully ready to admit, and be humbled for; for my own part I avow it, without hesitation; but in the path of righteousness and God’s will we know at least where strength lies. But enough of ourselves: you have compelled me thus far to be a fool.

I might have appealed to Mr. Kelly, at Clifton,

for the refutation of some of your suggestions; but I pass on to the charge of latitudinarianism, and it is only striking to my mind how evil and systematic habits hinder simple understanding and subjection to God's blessed word and ways. But first as to one or two charges. You charge us with having Baptists, Pædobaptists, Arminians, and Calvinists, Millennarians, Anti-Millennarians, and even Quakers. Well, are there not Pædobaptists, Arminians, Calvinists, Millennarians, Anti-Millennarians, in the Establishment, and teaching too? And Quakers have been received there too: also they have been with us, and have been baptized, as became them, from the circumstances they were placed in. The only difference, then, on this point, is as to the existence of these various views in the minds of those amongst us; they being real Christians, we should undoubtedly feel it wrong to shut them out, and rejoice we can walk together in love. There is only this additional difference, that there is not, through mercy, amongst us a vast body of members who have no faith at all. And I think you would find more unity of mind amongst us than amongst yourselves; nay, it was your complaint at Clifton, that we were all so made up in one mind, that wherever you met us you just heard the same testimony from us all; and when you had heard one, you had heard all. Others have made the same complaint. We are thankful the Lord has kept us thus hitherto, and lean on His mercy to be preserved in this unity. As to not being able to baptize, I have only to say you are quite mistaken, and that we do so when the occasion arises. That some are Baptists, so called, and some Pædobaptists amongst us, is very true; but by the Lord's mercy we have felt the unity of Christ's body more important than the unity of judgment on this point; and

each person, without any hindrance to charity, acts in this as he believes according to the mind of GOD. Would you exclude a Baptist from the Lord's table with you, were he disposed to go? We have acted on the principle of this word, "Whereto ye have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." "If in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal this also unto you." We have found most happy peace and flow of charity in it; we do not pretend to have attained perfect light in all that God reveals.

Next, sir, you should have been surely more guarded on reading the 17th chapter of John's Gospel, in talking of "the popular idol, unity." I think, sir, deference to the word of God should have made you attach more importance to it. That the world is imitating it by latitudinarianism I know; such is Satan's guile often, and I am not now denying, for I fully believe it, its existence; but the allusion is rather an unfortunate one. Are Churchmen, or the brethren engaged in carrying on this latitudinarianism of which you cite Irish national schools as the example? I believe the latitudinarianism you speak of is the principle of infidelity and atheism; but I know that the authorities of the Establishment were the means of its introduction into Ireland. Somehow they were able to exclude near three thousand godly men for a garment in 1662, but unable to hinder the introduction of public latitudinarianism in 1828. Was it the brethren or the public supporters and champions of the Church who announced that the reading of the Scriptures in the schools was a vital defect, because it was contrary to the principles of the Roman Catholic religion? I do not introduce these things I trust as recriminations. I have already said I believe modern latitudinarianism is just athe-

ism and infidelity in its worst and perhaps basest shape; nor am I aware of its existence amongst the brethren, but on the contrary the strongest testimony I know against its real evil. But I believe the narrow sectarianism of the Church as to rules of forms, and its extreme latitudinarianism in introducing by these forms a mass of unconverted, careless persons—careless unbelievers—within its pale, has given occasion to the existence of this latitudinarianism, and a plea for those who have the worst spirit of it to attack that of which the Establishment bears the name as more conscientious than it. Do you think, sir, an infidel cannot act on the minds of men in charging bigotry where godly men are excluded from Christ's Church for the shape or form of clothes—clean contrary to the apostolic rule?—and that a handle is not given such to ridicule the picture of holy pastorship when the sale of their appointments and the education for them as one of the professions are notorious facts, however the advocates of the Establishment may excuse or colour them? It is an awful time, and I would press upon you a time near judgment, when the conscience or moral judgment of infidels is in advance of the practice of that which carries the name of religion as the Establishment. Such is its effect; and thus while it feels the effect of latitudinarianism as inconvenient, it strengthens its hand by the position and character which it holds before them. It is this want of godliness and heavenly character in the Church which has given the world the occasion to legislate for it. Persecution there might be, but not legislation for a body who only sought heaven and renounced the world really. You may charge us, as they did Jeremiah, with weakening the hands of all the men of war in the city, but, by the help of the Lord, we would not

cease from our testimony, nor join the Edomites, but be alike strangers to what you call your Zion, and keep aloof from all that at bottom hate it; not because it is corrupt, but because it is *nominally* the house of God.

But having thus far replied to the charge of latitudinarianism, your statements as to the possibility of going beyond the foundation in teaching have to be noticed. And here it is remarkable how habits contrary to Scripture obscure the judgment; and while we are judged as if to set aside ministry, the real value of ministry is lost in the mind of one who rests on Establishment and creeds. The truth is, sir, Establishment—that is, men's support and a creed—has taken the place in your mind of the Holy Ghost and of truth. One would suppose that the person who made the remarks you do, did not really believe that there was any Holy Ghost really to guide, animate, control, order, and provide ministry in the Church; no Saviour to nourish and cherish it as His own flesh. This is our dependence (however feeble and faltering our dependence may be), that He will guide us into all truth—truth treasured up in the word of God, but into which we have daily to be guided, and all of which is before us in the word. You might say of yourselves, who have a limited standard of truth which you subscribe, “Where our creed ends, error begins.” But we have no limit to our creed, but the whole wisdom of the Bible; unless our own want of spirituality, which must ever hinder. We are open to receive and thirst for all truth. If you say, What is to keep you from error? we should watch against it on the very same principle that an apostle did (I do not say with the same power), but we can lean only on GOD to keep us from it; and we trust He will, and are sure He

will while we humbly wait on Him. You have, on the contrary, trusted a creed—so have the foreign ecclesiastical bodies; and what is the consequence? Error, justification by works, and neology—here in three-fourths of the pulpits of the country, abroad in eight-tenths. Creeds cannot give living truth to the soul, nor can they secure truth beyond the compiler of them, even in form. You have kept a measure of truth in a book, but nothing more: your body has fallen into error ruinous to souls just as much as even those you declaim against; and remember that even Neology and Socinianism prevailed more where creeds were than where they were not. I have not found the advocates of liturgies and creeds quite honest on this point; and if they boast of this country and the wisdom of its Churchmen (not the continuing grace of God), the answer is, It was dark as others; and it was grace, not creeds, which revived the Lord's work, and that not quite within the regulations and limits of the Church, I think you must admit. But as regards ourselves, if you cannot distinguish between the unity of GOD's saints on one foundation, and that, if you please, as you rather slightly say, in the blood—yes, the precious blood of Christ—and latitudinarianism; if your system of uniformity without unity have reduced you to this state of mind, I can only sorrow for it. If you call the unity of God's children a popular idol, we are sorry you are in such a state of mind; with us it is a cherished, deeply cherished object, because, in heart and principle at least, we are led by Him “who gave Himself not for that (His own) nation only, but that He might gather together in *one* the children of God which were scattered abroad:” and that the Holy Ghost leads us to seek to keep the unity *of the Spirit* in the bond of peace, in that by

one Spirit we are all baptized into one body—all one body, as partakers of that one loaf; and the prayer of Jesus has sounded in our ear a voice that subdues our thoughts, “that they all may be one, that the world may believe.” We may fail in the object—we cannot be wrong in the desire. But that the unity of God’s children (this alone we desire) is a popular idol, sounds to us like a stranger’s voice, not that of the Good Shepherd, and we flee from it. If you speak of confining ourselves to one truth, and teaching no more, this assertion must be meant for strangers. Have you found this to be the case? One truth, the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, I trust will ever hold undisguised prominency; but do you think those who have been much amongst us are less taught than those who have not been?—are less acquainted with scriptural truths? This is not a usual charge, whatever the value of knowledge may be; for I believe grace is far more important, though truth be most blessed; but our principle is this, sir: Whenever the first great truth of redemption—in a word, whenever Christ has received a person, we would receive him. That false brethren *may creep in unawares* is possible. If the Church be spiritual, they will soon be made apparent, but as our table is the Lord’s, not ours, we receive all that the Lord has received, all who have fled as poor sinners for refuge to the hope set before them, and rest not in themselves, but in Christ, as their hope. We then afterwards teach them as they are able, according to the grace, and knowledge, and wisdom we have received—all the truth we have received at God’s hands; and here it is that ministry comes in. We do not make a creed, but Christ the ground and term of union; but trusting to the help and ever-watchful and ready care of the Lord over us, and the true and

real presence of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, seek and give all the instruction, exhortation, comfort, and when need arises rebuke in love, we are enabled. One may lay the foundation, and all that are on it we receive, and another build thereon; and they must take heed how they build thereon. You may say, But there will be false teachers. So God has taught us, and all your plans will not prevent it; but the grace of God will overrule it, enable us to detect them by the word, and turn it to good; and your plans only hinder your leaning on that which is effectual—a spirit of constant dependence. There will be heresies—there must needs be, says the Apostle—that they which are approved may be made manifest. In a word, sir, your plan is to take the Church of GOD out of the field of faith and dependence, and thereby lead it away from the constant and blessed energies of the Holy Ghost, and make it lean on something else. But the truth is, God is most gracious, and faithful, and blessed in His careful mercy, though you may not trust Him. He knows that we have but a little strength; and though He has graciously permitted that which may exercise and strengthen our faith, He has never suffered us to be tempted above that we are able, but rather set before us an open door. The Lord keep us in the word of *His patience*, and men or Satan shall in vain seek to shut it.

We do then receive on the one great truth of Christ's salvation all that through divine grace believing it are converted to God. And we then, having ministry of truth, build them up according to what God has given us. That there is imperfection in the teaching I do not deny, for we are all imperfect. But I do not think, dear sir, if you are acquainted with, and your mind is based on Scripture, you can object on principle to this as unscriptural. I

think you would find amongst us the very opposite to latitudinarianism—a strong desire, prayer for, and search after unity among the saints of God; and the careful and diligent teaching of the measure of truth we have received. And if you say no good thing can come out of Nazareth, we will count it only prejudice, and say, “Come and see.”

As to our banishing of error, we have abundant provision in the word of God, if we have grace to do it; and on this we lean: without it clearly we can do nothing. You assert that the Scripture is insufficient for this, precisely on the same ground as the Roman Catholic does. We have no stealthy standard at all; we openly condemn every discovered error. We believe not in the infallibility of the clergy, and the insufficiency of the Scripture, and the sufficiency of humanly composed creeds, which is your ground. You say, with the Roman Catholic, that a Socinian could appeal to the written word. Could he? Do you say he could?—But we believe in the sufficiency of the Scripture, and the grace, energy, and power of the Spirit—the Comforter, to keep out error from the Church, so as to guide us in the truth.

This is a very grave question—I believe the question between us; yet I would not willingly *say* so; for I believe it to be the question between apostacy and the special point of truth now. But you have put yourselves on this ground: you deny either the sufficiency of Scripture, or the grace of the Spirit to use it under the faithfulness of our blessed Head’s love to the Church. On this, in all our weakness, we lean. You say, “If you say in the written word,” well, the Socinian professes to find *his* there too. Did you never hear this from other mouths, arguing against Protestant platforms, or clergymen elsewhere? I tremble,—nay, but it confirms my faith

when I see arrows drawn from such a quiver. You say, "Would you receive a Roman Catholic?" If a Roman Catholic really "extolled Jesus" as a Saviour, and His one sacrifice of Himself as the sole putting away of sin, he would have ceased to hold the error and delusion by which the enemy has misled some souls (who are still I would trust precious to Jesus), he would have ceased to be a Roman Catholic in the evil sense of the word, and on these terms only could he be with us. I repeat, then, we receive all that are on the foundation, and reject and put away all error by the word of God, and the help of His ever-blessed, ever living, and ever present Spirit. If you have neutralized the Church's energies by mixing it with the world, so as to be unable to do this, it is matter of sorrow surely, not of boast. Justification by works is preached in the majority of pulpits to souls. You refer me to a scrap of paper which the poor people have never read, so that your provision against error is null. Such preaching would not be borne for one time by one single person professing to be a minister amongst us; and to your suggestion, "God knows what mischief you may inflict upon them," my only answer is, "God knows what mischief you have inflicted upon them." The stranger's voice, sir, has been heard in hundreds of pulpits of the Establishment. Has it not? Well, the sheep have fled from it. Do you rebuke them? you may tell them to stay and hear it. They dare not, by virtue of their weakness and timidity. It is not the Shepherd's voice: their safety is in flight, not in pretended strength or artificial reasonings. You have scattered the sheep by your system, and as yet your conscience is not awakened. I have little hope that it will be, or rather the change is impossible. Parliament is your legislator, not yourselves,—a body I suppose

you would charge with evil enough now: I thank God I have nothing to say to it. It is really a little too bad to be told we cannot testify the second advent, and the agency of the Spirit. Forgive me if I ask how you could really honestly say this, when they are the two great topics to which testimony among us has been specially directed—to urge which meetings have been held both yearly and wherever God has opened a door; so that our adversaries have charged us with being a Millennialian Church, and Irvingites, on account of these two topics being so much held up before the saints? But I need hardly answer this charge. A charge that the brethren cannot teach the second advent, and the agency of the Spirit, will have but small weight, unless to show you were a little hard set for an argument.

As to “Where is your security for continuing to exclude error?” I reply, In God alone is continuance. We have found error in your teaching, which is excluded from amongst us now. So far, we have clear gain, for we were continuing in error while with you. But nothing but grace will keep us onward. This may seem a poor dependence to you; it is our only one. I press this point, sir. When Paul said that after his decease grievous wolves should enter in, not sparing the flock; yea, that of their own selves men would arise teaching perverse things, to draw away disciples after them; he desired them to watch, and remember how he had not ceased night and day with tears to warn every man; and then, stating that his own hands had ministered to his necessities, and that he had showed them how that so labouring they ought to support the weak, he commends them to God and the word of His grace, which was able to build them up, and give them an inheritance among them that are sanctified. To

what he apostolically commanded them we look, to God, and the word of His grace; and we would endeavour as far as possible, as far as we have grace, to watch, and by His own blessed mercy we have in our feeble measure done so. Without His grace we are sure we should go astray; but we lean upon it, and in the trial consequent on the absence of apostolic energy, here forewarned of by the blessed and zealous servant of the Lord, we have endeavoured in principle to turn to and use that to which He has directed us. If you think creeds more efficacious, our answer might be, they have not proved so. Witness all the different Protestant Establishments, and indeed the whole professing Church in its departure from the faith once delivered. But my answer goes further, and I say the ground of your appeal to them is that of the insufficiency of Scripture, a recurrence to other means of securing truth, or therewith a practical denial of the presence of the Spirit of God—the Spirit of truth, the Comforter—to use it. Here we openly take a plain ground against the principles or apostacy of Catholicism, and the identically same ground taken by the defenders of the Establishment. We are on ground of the very last importance to the Church of God now. You rest in tradition in some shape, ancient or modern, it matters not. I do not: I rest under divine grace—my only hope for unworthy and helpless sinners, in the perfect sufficiency of the word, and the presence of the Spirit in the Church, according to the faithfulness of God. This I believe is a cardinal point for the Church of God now—this great and blessed truth being taken in connexion with it, that the Holy Spirit is present with the Church, abiding for ever. Popery and the Establishment take ecclesiastical succession and creeds, and assert together that the Bible

is not an all-sufficient guide, leaving quite aside the continual presence of the Holy Ghost. Tradition and successional authority are their resource; and let me add that you cannot even plead here that you refer to tradition, or authority, or some other resource than Scripture and the Holy Ghost, merely for rites and ceremonies; we are discussing *creeds* here. Your argument is, that it is insufficient in practice for matters of faith, and to banish error—assuming, as I have surely title to do, the faithfulness of God by His Spirit. If you deny it, do so openly. I see no reference to it in your letter, or that on which your system rests. As to this, my answer, then, to this charge is, we admit of no heterodoxy, but all Christians. If you ask, How can you do this? I answer, By the word, and Spirit, and grace of God. Your system receives the population, and calls unity a popular idol, and (Mr. M'Neil being witness) is arranged so as to appoint pastors, *because* they are unfit. The fact he admits; and I have already asked you, is not the person so appointed recognized as the only *lawful* minister of the parish, and all else intruders? instituted *by the Bishop* as such, recognized by the ecclesiastical court as such, and by every authority (except the Lord's) in the country?

If you say the Bishop cannot help it, I say, "Just so, because it is the legal system, and not an abuse of it at all."

I can apprise you, if public rumour has not, that the members who have increased our fellowship latterly, have been, I think I may say chiefly (at least in England) from among dissenters, feeling the evil of their system as well as of yours—at any rate quite as large a number, and of the Establishment very many, by the conversion to God often of those long accepted as members among you; in other cases of

poor neglected souls, to whose ears the truth had never reached by that which claims to provide for all as of the Church of England. But the most remarkable accessions, and the action of our testimony among Christians, has been *de facto* chiefly among dissenters. Two dissenting ministers who came to the Clifton meeting to get all the good they could, and not to challenge us all, and banish away all our errors, found happy and joyful liberty in fellowship with us, and we with them; and this testimony I trust will spread. Many Christians from the Establishment also have found their joy and fellowship along with us.

When you speak of our violating our principles by teaching other than what is common, as I have already stated, it is only that you do not know them. If you mean "by authoritatively setting them forth, as lords over their faith," certainly we disclaim it. As helpers of their joy we teach all we can: we will teach or be taught by you, if you can edify us in the Lord, and be thankful for it. If God has given you any gift, we are there in no dilemma at all: we meet on the ground of the foundation, Christ; and we learn, and as God has enabled any, teach all that is in the Bible, trusting God to keep us from error; and if "there must needs be heresies," trusting it shall be through His grace that they which are approved may be made manifest. This continual responsibility of the Church in its perpetual conflict with Satan, not yet cast down and bound, you seem to have lost sight of, or to suppose that you can provide for the exclusion of. But then the Church must lose its heavenly-mindedness and character, for we do wrestle with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places; and all the profit of the exercise of faith, and the deeper acquaintance with the whole armour of God, and the

faithfulness of the God who gave it, and gives it to us still.

I believe only one material point remains unnoticed still, on which indeed many preceding facts and statements bear, honouring the Holy Ghost, which introduces in your letter the question of ministry. The facts to which the system you advocate leads have been already noticed, and if you think the sale of advowsons, the giving of the appointment of the chief pastors or bishops into the hands of the Crown, honouring the Holy Ghost's rule in the Church, certainly there are many (such as the *Irish Christian Journal* describes as having morbid consciences) who cannot. This, I say, which is the regular order of the Establishment, the constitution of it, is not honouring the Holy Ghost. It is not merely there being the fact of an ordained ministry. I see nothing like an appointment of elders in an existing body of Christians, in the ordaining young men of twenty-three or twenty-four, in the nomination of a pastor who has got an appointment from some lord of the manor, or his being made a priest, presbyter if you please, on the same appointment. You do not arrogate to yourselves, you say, the selection of your ministers, but you give them authority to exercise their gift, when they say they are called, and the bishop has ascertained by certain testimony they are of good morals, not heretics, and can answer in Latin. Now supposing this sufficient and right (both of which I entirely deny, and say that it is entirely unscriptural, and opposed to Scripture, but it would lead me into another large question), you do in the appointment of this person to some cure, not by the Spirit, but by a landlord, preclude others from exercising their gift there in the Church, and thereby, as the appointment is secular, and you dis-

honour the Holy Ghost in that, so the direction of the word of God, "as every man hath received the gift, so minister the same, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God," is set aside. It is not, "he that teacheth let him wait on his teaching, he that exhorteth on his exhortation." All gifts must be assumed to be in the secularly appointed minister, or the Church deprived of them. This is what I call dishonouring the Holy Ghost. Again, when you speak of not selecting ministers, what is your system? You have divided the country into ten thousand parishes. Who has authorized you to say that the Holy Ghost would raise up just ten thousand ministers at all times to minister by His help and power in these parishes? Yet by your system you are bound to provide for them, and in order to the attainment of this, secular advantages are attached, and titles of nomination put into the hands of interested persons. This I call dishonouring the Holy Ghost, "who distributes to every man severally as He will." It all hangs on the same great system, that it is the world, and not the Church. Suppose your ecclesiastical authorities sincere, though I do not admit their title at all, they are administering a system which sets quite aside the sovereign ministry of the Holy Ghost in distributing as *He* will. The ten thousand parishes are to be filled; men have a secular right to fill them, or to sell their title. This is not waiting on, honouring, or owning the authority and only power of the Holy Ghost to bless and minister by vessels of His appointing and qualifying in the Church. And then, when thus filled, the Holy Ghost's title to raise up one to teach in one of them, or to exhort in one of them (though indeed they are not Churches at all), is positively denied, such an one is disorderly and schismatic. The Holy Ghost is limited by your

system to the ten thousand clergy, and their curates perhaps, and is assumed to provide them for the nomination of the owners of advowsons, and none else. I am not speaking this lightly, for I believe it is a most horrible and crying dishonour done to the Holy Ghost. If I were to speak to the majority of your clergy of the "Holy Ghost distributing to every man severally as He will," they would account me an enthusiast and a fanatic; or to the owners of advowsons, of His raising up elders and pastors of His selecting and appointment, they would treat me as wild and dissenting. Their affair was their rights, and they exercise them.

Where there are ten thousand offices specifically to fill, and an education to fill them provided as a qualification, it is a profession, and not a ministry depending on the Holy Ghost, distributing as He will. The statement that a man is moved to it comes in by-and-by, and itself lumps all possible ministries, to the exclusion of all others, into one nominally a deacon's, and then an elder's—very excellent offices in their place, but neither of them really undertaken, or ought not to be, at that age; neither of them properly or necessarily ministries of the word, though they may be united with them. But this may be called confusion, not dishonour to the Holy Ghost, and is only collaterally connected with the question. But while I might turn to abuses enough to drive almost an infidel from the professed Church in disgust, were I to turn to the preparation for the ministry at the universities, I confine myself to the plain facts and arrangements of the system. These abuses indeed are its genuine consequences, because it has been made a regular, settled, lucrative profession: it must be if the Church goes by a geographical division of the population, not the gathering of the

saints. But the plain facts and arrangements of the system permit no one to preach save those called by man, and who have received authority from man; so that in the principle of it St. Paul could not—for he asserts the contrary principle—provide livings for so many, say ten thousand ministers, whether the Holy Ghost has called them or not, and forbid any else to exercise it, so much so that a bishop cannot ordain without a nomination, though the man would profess that he was called and moved by the Holy Ghost still. They are educated for it, without possibly knowing whether they will be so moved or not, being designed for the ministry or for a living by their parents as boys; and when placed there, their one gift, if they have any, must exclusively be exercised—a pastor with perhaps no saints, or a young evangelist with old Christians to feed, and this regulated by secular appointment. There is not then the least reference to owning or following the Holy Ghost as the source of authority, and various gifts in the Church of God; and if he should act without this secular system, his work is treated as disorderly. I say, then, that the Holy Ghost is not really honoured at all in this system. To make a parcel of young men, educated for the purpose, come and say they are moved by the Holy Ghost, when it is in nine cases out of ten secular and family arrangements which have induced it, I do not think this honouring the Holy Ghost; nor, if all really were, do I believe that it would be honouring His authority, His paramount authority in the Church of God. I challenge you to show me anything the least like the organization of the Church of England in the Scripture—a parochial arrangement of the population, justified by a set of written documents that they are Christians, which all are called on to use.

As regards what you state of the Clifton meeting, you must know that it was not an assembly of the saints as a Church for teaching or worship at all, but a private meeting to which we were all invited by the two persons who arranged it, and yourself in like manner. I see nothing inconsistent in their asking such as they thought likely to edify to lecture and pray as a morning service, or indeed any other arrangement they might make, provided those individually called on felt disposed and led to do it. No such thing is ever done when the brethren meet for worship; all who can edify the Church may speak, subject to the apostolic rule for order. If any taught error, or acted in the flesh, it would be subject to righteous discipline, or any other fleshly act. The Scripture, if we have grace to use it, we find abundantly sufficient for this: we recognize, moreover, distinct and ordinary abiding gifts, as it is said "there were certain teachers in the Church." If you think the Spirit of God cannot make good His power by the word spoken in the conscience, or detect error, and the pretence of the flesh, you have a blessed truth to learn.

How do you know we have not fasting and prayer when any special work may be on hand, or any brother to be commended to the Lord for any special service? Is it right to assume the truth of such charges? We may have been deficient, but had you been among us, you would have known that fasting and prayer have often and often been the resource and comfort of our souls before God in any various circumstances, and sometimes merely to seek more of His presence and blessing. I dare say we have not done it sufficiently, nor as we ought.

We have no election of ministers at all, so that all your remarks on this are gratuitous. God in His

mercy has provided us with many who have been a comfort to our souls, and spread, I trust, much truth by them; we find still the harvest plenty, and the labourers few, and therefore earnestly pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest. Whatever He gives we shall receive thankfully, and if any special work arises to which they may be called, be ready, I trust, to recommend them to the grace of God for it.

The way you speak of authority hindering the Spirit shows you understand our principles in nothing. True authority is by the Spirit just as much as any other gift, and, instead of hindering, is one service of it. That the Church is in the same order and energy as to this as in apostolic days, we do not pretend, as you do; though the majority of your authorities, from the nature of their appointment (which Mr. M'Neil says is by an iniquity of abuses truly disgusting), are not from the Spirit at all, and generally opposed to the truth. We believe the Church to have fallen and gone astray. Your condition is the plain evidence of it. We do not pretend to have competency to set it all right, but to act in righteousness, strengthening those things that remain ready to perish, and to walk in love, which is the bond of perfectness. We do not say we can restore the Shechinah, or the Urim and Thummim, nor the Ark of the Covenant; but we will do all we can that the word of God authorizes and enables us, by the Holy Ghost, even yet with the Church to do. You pretend to all these things, but we say they are false; and that is worse than nothing—a wretched picture which the spiritual eye detects as not even like the scriptural originals.

I believe I have answered all the questions, charges, and observations in your letter. If I have not tired

you, I certainly have myself: but I could not answer your questions and charges lightly, and a short question perhaps involved the investigation of important principles; but I have endeavoured to confine myself to what was properly in answer to your statements, and not diverge into others, though perhaps important topics. Though you have in nowise followed your proposed plan of certain questions which I was to answer, I have fairly, I trust, gone into all which your paper suggests, not as a mere arguer, but on the substantial grounds of the merits of the question, for it is not a mere question between *us*. The enemies of the Establishment might be displeased with me that I have not run through its abuses, and I have not wished to do so. It is hard to be occupied with dirt, and not get dirty. I am persuaded we have not much business with evil, save in direct spiritual denunciation of it when actually before us, or warning against it. I have dealt with the principles of the system, which I believe deprives it of the title to present itself to the consciences as *the* or a Church of God, and make it guilty of much dishonour done to His name. I am not conscious of having used an ungracious or harsh expression, nor even ascribed motives to any. I believe there are many saints within its pale. You will not have any aspersions to answer, unless stating acknowledged facts are such. You will hardly accuse me of evading discussion, though I have endeavoured to confine myself (under the Lord's guidance) to what I proposed, answering your questions. At any rate, I have stated the ground on which my mind actually rests, as regards the particular points you have referred to. That the gross and palpable consequences met with in every-day life act on the conscience, I admit. and so in the Lord's mercy it will be with

multitudes unable to trace the principles. But any poor saint conversant in Scripture is soon convinced by practical comparison that the Church of England is not the Church of God, by what he meets every day in his own parish; and it requires an uncommon deal of theology and tradition to show how it is, and many a chain put upon plain conscience: as when I go to the parish church on what is called Sacrament Sunday, or Easter, and am told I am bound to own all I find there as Christians, when I know well all the other days of the year they make no pretence to it; and am perhaps plainly told by my minister, if he knows the truth, all the other days in the year that they are not, and the difference pressed upon me. However you have the principles and system here, not even its consequences. And I ask you, does the Establishment contemplate having all the population within her ordinances, or distinctly gathering together in one the children of God which are scattered abroad? The latter I would desire and seek; preaching to all. In whose hands is the appointment of the pastors of the Establishment as instituted and recognized by the bishops themselves? If the Holy Ghost be He who gives and orders the gift of^s pastorship, and their exercise, on what authority do you divide the country, without reference to the actual presence of living faith, into ten thousand and some one hundred portions, and assign a pastor to each, to the exclusion of all other spiritual gifts? Do you *de facto* acknowledge the mass of members of the Establishment as really Christians? Ought there to be any *body* to whom it could be said that they should love one another with a pure heart fervently, seeing they had obeyed the truth through the Spirit, to the unfeigned love of the brethren? Ought the saints of God to be gathered together in

unity? I have written offhand, trusting to the Lord my God to direct and guide me, as indeed my letter will witness. I do not think I have omitted any point in your letter.

Believe me truly,

Yours in the Lord,

J. N. D.

I have written to the *Record*, I confess with little hope at any rate of their putting so long letters as these in. I do not write to the *Patriot*, not wishing to have the appearance of identifying myself with what I have seen of its spirit. I shall hardly be suspected of this with the *Record*. But if you will write to the *Patriot*, who will be above suspicion on that side, I should have no objection. The *Patriot* is more opposed to us at this moment than the *Record*.

The remainder of Mr. Kelly's letter, dated Dublin, March 18th, 1842, referred to in the Introduction, with some notes in reply by Mr. J. N. Darby.

I DID remind you that in my former letter putting you on the defensive, as you wished, I asked you *not* why you had left THE Church, but why you had left the Church of England. What I wished was to avoid "begging the question." You knew what body the phrase "Church of England" denoted, and that you had left it. I wanted to ascertain your reasons for leaving it; but although I used the common term "*Church of England*," I did not intend to give up the point that the body thus denominated was the CHURCH OF GOD IN ENGLAND; and however you are disposed to exclaim at my intolerance, this is my position. I cannot allow the title "*Church*"* to apply to your union of Plymouth brethren, as you are called, or to any class of separatists; at the same time when I unchurch you *collectively*, I do not unchristian you *individually*. I may admit that those members of Parliament who attend political unions are *bonâ fide* members; but this is a very different thing from admitting that the meeting is a meet-

* I feel it to be of little importance what name is given to those who meet in the name of Jesus, provided they follow faithfully the word of God.

ing of Parliament. Thus my belief concerning you and all dissenters is that you may *individually* be Christians, but your meetings are schismatical—a sinful rending of the body of Christ;* and a meeting of this kind, though composed of Christians, is not to be confounded with the Church of God meeting in the name of Jesus.

I would now briefly touch on the contents of your letter in general, calculated as they are to make unreflecting Christians impatient of what is their path of duty, namely, adhering to the Church of England.

And first allow me to say that you confound the question of the *establishment* of the Church with its *constitution*. The establishment of, that is, in other words, the receiving the State† into the Church, with the interference naturally allowed to the State in certain ecclesiastical arrangements, has, I admit,

* According to this, the Church of England is the body of Christ, and those not of the Church of England are not of the body of Christ; “rending the body of Christ” may alarm timid consciences, but neither the expression nor the idea are scriptural; the body of Christ cannot be rent—His sheep may be dispersed, and the national system has abundantly succeeded in that.

† It is singular how false systems darken the intelligence. To a person who has learnt to think with Scripture, “receiving the State into the Church” presents no conceivable idea. Put the assembly of believers, or “the assembly of God,” in place of “the Church,” and what is the meaning of “receiving the State into the assembly of God?” God may add such as should be saved, three thousand souls may be added to the Church, false brethren may creep in—in a word, men or souls may be received in, but how the State can be received in it is impossible to conceive. And what is “the interference naturally allowed to the State,” when the Holy Ghost can alone really govern and act in the power of God? It is easy to talk of ecclesiastical arrangements, and “naturally allowed,” when the title of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost are forgotten; but that the State should interfere in the work of the Holy Ghost is very unnatural to those who are accustomed to look at the Church as the Church of God, where all that is real is of the Holy Ghost.

through the unwatchfulness of the Church, led to many evils, just as the accession of men of rank and fortune creeping into your little community might operate unfavourably upon it, and hinder its efficiency for good. But *establishment* is not the *essence* of the Church; its truth and apostolicity, as it came not from the State, nor is maintained by it, so neither can it be taken away by the State. Should the State, that is the Queen and her executives, to-morrow forsake the Church of England, and adopt* one of the sects of the day, suppose *yours*, making the profession, &c., you require—and I see not how you could decline *this* union—the Church of England would not cease to be *the Church of God*. Her endowments might be rapaciously seized on, her buildings for worship alienated from her use, the different orders of her ministers proscribed, her members reduced to meet in a “little upper chamber,” but still might she, and I trust would she, be God’s chosen witness in the land: *unestablished* she might be, but not *unchurched*. Parliament, with all its vaunted omnipotence, could not reach to this. You may perhaps take an exception to this assertion, from the fact to which you allude of ten bishoprics in Ireland having been extinguished by Parliament; but I maintain this could not have been done had the Church herself been faithful, and for her disloyalty to her glorious Head in this matter much chastening has fallen, and I am persuaded will fall on her. Her language to the State when this aggression was threatened, ought

* The Queen could not adopt the brethren, as they are called. If through the grace of God the Queen be converted, and take her place among God’s children, she does it not as Queen, but as any other sinner saved by grace, though God’s children will render her, and even every subordinate magistrate, all honour in the place in which God has set them as rulers.

to have been—what many, though not, alas, the majority of her members felt—“ You may confiscate our properties, though it is personal robbery ; you may grasp our diocesan and parochial revenues throughout the country, though it is sacrilege ; but you must not dare to lay your hands on the ark, or spiritual functions : as the Church of God, we shall, despite of all pains and penalties, maintain the succession of our ministers.” Such, I say, should have been the language of the Church on the occasion in question, followed up, if necessary, by the election of bishops to the condemned sees as they fell vacant. Her sin has been that she submitted to the usurpation of the State, in not keeping up the succession of her chief pastors ; yea, that she did not exercise discipline in excommunicating the perpetrators* of so presumptuous an act, even though the highest personage in the realm might have become thereby involved.

But I ask, did not the Church of Thyatira act somewhat after the same manner, when her great Head thus speaks to her : “ Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols ” (Rev. ii. 20) ? Yet you admit Thyatira to have been a true Church of God. I do beg the attention of our readers to this. The Church of England, it is acknowledged with sorrow, does suffer the State to encroach too much on sacred things, but the Church of Thyatira connived † at similar evil. And if you say that this

* And among the rest all the bishops, who, as lords spiritual, figure among the enactors of the Bill.

† How the Church of Thyatira connived at similar evil I am at a loss to discover. That assembly of God was fearfully culpable in not

was consistent with the latter being a true Church of God, why not say the same in regard to the former ?

Let our readers remember you have subscribed to this scriptural principle, that *we are not to leave a true Church because of corruption in her* ; and I fear not the effect of your letter upon them, for the denial that the Church of England, whose martyrs are before the throne of God, is a *Church at all*, is so monstrous, and the reasoning to prove it from the adventitious circumstance of her being established so inconclusive, that every one must see the untenableness of the position which reduces its dependers to such shifts, such revolutionary assertions.

I consider that, with these observations, all your allegations concerning the appointment by irreligious statesmen to offices in the Church are fully disposed of. They relate, I repeat, to the question of the Church's establishment,* the arrangement of which may be more or less prejudicial to her ; but they touch not her essential character as a true apostolic Church ; and moreover let it not be forgotten that, though an infidel minister may nominate to bishop-

exercising discipline when seductive errors were taught by one pretending to be a prophetess. The Establishment makes all the unconverted Christians in a lump, and ascribes to the State and other authorities, as a civil right, the nomination of all those who have places of pastors and other authorities in her pale. The Church of Thyatira was very guilty, but was a guilty Church ; the Establishment is all the *world* in England, having substituted a civil arrangement for the power of the Holy Ghost. I cannot discover the analogy. To use the expression of an eloquent foreigner, "the Establishment has made of unfaithfulness an institution."

* Establishment or not, it is the fact that the bishops and priests are presented to their places by the persons alluded to. There lies the whole point. That act of revolt against the authority of the Spirit is the legal, the only legal position of a member of the Establishment, and he treats, according to the writer, as schismatics all who do not acquiesce in it.

rics, yet he must select for the dignity from amongst those whom the Church herself has sanctioned with her confidence,* so that if the Church were faithful to the word of her God, the bishops laying hands suddenly on no man, she might, notwithstanding her connexion with the State, defy its deteriorating influence.

I come, secondly, to your strictures on the Baptismal Service of the Church. And here I would request our readers to observe the important place the ordinance occupies in the New Testament, standing as it does in relation to every blessed feature of the divine life in the souls of believers. For example, as to the forgiveness of sins, we read, "*Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins*" (Acts xxii. 16). As to our identification of Christ in His death, "*we are buried with Him by baptism unto death*" (Rom. vi. 4). As to the participation with Him in His resurrection life, "*wherein also ye are risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God*" (Col. ii. 12). As to the "*unity*" even of the Church, about which you say so much, we find it also associated with baptism, "*for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body*" † (1 Cor. xii. 13). Now is not this continual connexion of baptism with the operations of the Spirit of God an ample warrant for the importance assigned to it in the Liturgy of the Church of England? whilst strongly contrasting, I must add, with the *liberalism* of your party, which leaves its

* The Church has sanctioned with her confidence, for what? to be a bishop or the pastor of such a flock? If Nero or Domitian had appointed Diotrephes Bishop of Ephesus or pastor, would that have been the sanctioned act of the Holy Ghost? or John, whose surname was Mark? or Luke? or any other? Would not such an act have a deteriorating influence?

† "Baptized by one Spirit" is not the baptism of water, but of the Holy Ghost, which is the true power of unity.

reception or rejection an open question.* As to the efficacy ascribed to the ordinance by the Church of England, in that after its administration we “thank God for regenerating the person baptized” (and I take these words in their plain obvious sense), it is quite consistent, I conceive, with the word of God, for the foregoing passages, tracing back as they do the spiritual life of Christians to baptism as its source,† certainly indicates the efficacy of the ordinance *in their*

* There are those among the brethren who are not content with the baptism which they received in infancy, and have thought it more scriptural to have adults baptized on their believing; thus the manner or circumstances of baptism have been differently judged of by many amongst them; but instead of its being an open question, I never heard of baptism itself being a question at all among them. A few who left the Quaker body naturally passed individually through this question, that body not receiving the Sacrament; but it was only to lead them to attach due importance to it.

† None of these passages trace spiritual life to baptism. They speak of the position in which believers were placed by baptism as their formal entrance into Christianity by a public confession, but none attribute life to baptism as its source: “Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth.” It would be singular if it were the case, that the Apostle should thank God that he baptized none, God having sent him not to baptize (not therefore that life might be received), but to preach the Gospel, the reception of which in the heart, it appears, by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, does not communicate life, though it be the power of God unto salvation ~~to~~ every one that believeth. “He that hath the Son hath life.” It may be true that he who refuses to confess the Son in baptism, is not to be counted as having life; but to speak of baptism as the *source* of life would be quite a sufficient error to oblige the rejection of the Established system, as in its root papist and heretical; it is an essential and vital point. It is a source of life too, hypothetical on the secret of election it appears, without any action on the conscience, or testimony of the word of God. Hence also every case of conversion or regeneration of adults in these countries, at least in the pale of the Establishment, is absolutely false. Such a thing cannot exist, for being proved elect by their fruits and the seal of the Holy Ghost, it is evident, according to the writer, that they have been regenerated at their baptism. All his preaching of the truth, that souls may be begotten to God by the word, is false from beginning to end, for all the elect who are there have been already regenerated in their baptism. *Would he tell them so*—the drunkards,

case—that is, of the real Church, the elect of God. But who are we to discriminate between them and the non-elect? We cannot do it, and therefore in the judgment of charity we speak of all as being regenerated. In a word, we speak of the *visible* Church in terms that belong to the elect Church, because we cannot distinguish them, and that this is scriptural see the Apostle's language concerning the Israelites of old: * “*They did all eat the same spiritual meat, and they did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ: but with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness*” (1 Cor. x. 3—5). Here we perceive the

fornicators, avaricious—that, if elect, they have been regenerated already really at their baptism, and of course cannot be so again? they have only to mend their ways? Where faith comes in it is hard to tell; but these regenerate persons are as to their hearts unbelievers, and perhaps oppose the truth of God strongly. But to what a labyrinth does error introduce us. Or would he say that these unhappy sinners, or the self-righteous, who are really just as bad, can never be regenerate, and cannot be among the elect? Alas, alas, where does systematic error lead him to whom the system is truth!

* Why does the writer omit the part of the verse that relates to baptism which does not hint at anything spiritual? “They were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” To apply figuratively—and in the part of the passage quoted it is avowedly a figure—the name of the thing signified to the sign, is altogether another thing from affirming its efficacy in the individual who partakes of it. This latter is what the writer attempts to justify as to his use of the passage he here quotes for it, having omitted, as we have seen, the part relating to baptism. The Article of the Church of England itself will be a complete refutation; it takes pains to make the distinction Mr. Kelly would do away. Article 28 is entitled, “Of the wicked who eat not the body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper.” Although they carnally press the Sacrament with their teeth, yet in nowise are they partakers of Christ. The writer's view is merely the *opus operato* doctrine of the Papists applied to the elect—not a tittle else. The passage in the Corinthians is to show that men may partake of sacraments and not of life. Mr. Kelly uses it to show that we may rightly affirm life of all those who partake of the sacraments. It is a singular perversion of the passage to the exact opposite of its intention.

participation of Christ, which belonged in reality only to some, predicated of all, because all partook of the sacramental sign. It would be well, my dear sir, if, before you revile the Church of England for the vocabulary she employs in this and her other formularies, you had examined the Scriptures more accurately; it might have changed your scorn into reverence to observe that invariably the receiving of the sign is spoken of in language belonging to the reception of the thing signified.

The next thing to which it occurs to me to allude is your reference to my expression "*the popular idol, unity,*" by which you seem greatly shocked; but why? Is there not such a thing? Are not men of all classes endeavouring to coalesce for the promotion of their favourite object, *by foregoing the assertion of inconvenient truths?* and is not this a characteristic of your party? Look, for instance, at the ordinance I have been just speaking of, baptism; because its scriptural use, as introductory to the Church, is adverse to the sentiment of some among you, it is omitted. The same, *if you were consistent,* would apply to your *preaching,* for there being no agreement among you as to what constitutes "*the truth,*" beyond the elementary point devotionally held that Jesus is the Christ, to proceed further in the Christian faith would tend to hazard the maintenance of your unity, and so there could not be edification. *But you are inconsistent,* happily for this end: accordingly, though in a covert way, uniting to undervalue baptism, on which God lays such stress, you have a secret Shibboleth,* I repeat, made up of other things, which gives you a sort of

* We have a public Bible, the sufficiency of which the writer seems exceedingly to call in question.

latitude in your teaching. Were it not for this secret Shibboleth, you could not exclude even the Popish priest, if he *chose* to be one of you, for he could say he believed in Christ as the Saviour of sinners, the Lamb of God; but then you have set it down *in your minds* that the doctrines of Popery are an abomination—that is, you have your Thirty-nine Articles, your interpretation of truth, though not printed; and therefore, if he got up to teach you about the *sacrifice of the mass*, you would silence him, and put him from among you. In short, if you acted *consistently* with your boast that you have no creeds or interpretations of truth among you, then you could have no unity—at least it would only be that of different colours in the dark; and thus whereinsoever you have unity, by acting *inconsistently*, it is obvious your system cannot get the credit of it.

As we are upon the subject of the unity of the Church, allow me to add that the passage in John xvii. 21, upon which you lay such emphasis, I mean our Lord's prayer that they *may be one*, &c., does not contemplate the Church in her present state, dispersed through the world,* but rather in her future glory which awaits her at the coming of her Lord.

* "Dispersed through the world." But the Saviour gave Himself to gather into one the children of God which are scattered abroad, or dispersed through the world. The Lord does not speak there of gathering into one in heaven, for no question could be as to that; He speaks of an economy distinct from the nation. He gave Himself for the nation, and to gather the children of God into one. "There is one Spirit, and one body," which applies to this world, because the Apostle speaks of what the *joints* supply for the increase of the body, as elsewhere of the members suffering with each other. Also the passage in John is in contrast with the unity in glory; the Saviour prays that those that believe through their word *may be one*, that the world may *believe*, and then adds, "The glory which Thou hast given me I have given them, that they may be made *perfect in one*, that the world *may know*."

Then indeed shall she be manifestly one in union with her glorious Head, and then will the world believe that the Father sent Him. Your interpretation antedates this consummation.

One remark more, and I shall have done. You misrepresent me in saying that by my plan, or rather the Church's, "I would take the Church of God out of the field of faith and dependence on the energies of the Holy Ghost." Such is not the case. I would have the most implicit faith exercised, and the Holy Ghost honoured in all His offices by the child of God, but I see not that the use of *means* is incompatible with this. *The Holy Ghost works by means.* Paul, who, as you quote, in the prospect of perverse men arising after his decease to deceive the Ephesian Church, commended "to God and the word of His grace" as the real safeguard, omits not to instruct Timothy, who presided over that Church; thus, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii. 2). In like manner Peter says, "Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." According to you, no provision ought to be made for future exigencies in the Church of God, but all should be left to the Spirit when the crisis comes; and, consistently with this, we should not multiply copies of the word of God by printing, using that human invention, type;* but the Holy Ghost should be expected to speak orally in the various assemblies of believers,

* Does the writer mean to place the use of the word of God on the same ground with human arrangements, and learning, and academies, and the education of young men for a profession who perhaps are not faithful at all, as if that was the ministry of the Church of Christ?

using some individual as his organ, and thus superseding our ingenuity!

Let me tell you, my dear sir, it is not honouring the Holy Ghost to disdain the helps which prudence and experience suggest for preserving the precious deposit of the faith, and maintaining the unity of the Church; it is rather tempting and grieving Him. Satan would have God honoured thus when he plied Jesus with his artful reasoning, that if He were the Son of God He should cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple; but Jesus replied, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."* True faith will depend on God in the use of all lawful means; and in regard to the edification of the Church, will not risk it by abolishing all form of sound words, and preparation for the ministry, and then leaving that ministry open to all who may choose to take it upon them, running before they are sent; but putting into requisition † every reasonable precaution, will then

* Tempting God, was making essays to try whether the Lord was among them, saying, "Is the Lord indeed amongst us?" not a humble confidence that He was, and therefore doing His will being based on that confidence.

† It is hard to see how educating young men for the ministry, without knowing whether God has called them at all, and then waiting upon God for His blessing, is a reasonable precaution. In the national system young men are educated for the ministry, and afterwards called upon, when their life has received this direction as a profession, to declare that they are called of God. I find it hard to call this a reasonable precaution, if I believe the Holy Ghost to be the only real source of ministry. Besides, reasonable precautions are a very precarious ground, when our point is to follow the word of God. There is no precaution like obedience. All that this sentence means is, that when man has arranged things according to his own wisdom, then he will expect God to bless. That which is condemned by the writer puts God's blessing and will *first*, and looks to that as the source of comfort and edification. The fact is, that every one who wills enters on what is called the ministry of the Establishment, if he has a decent education in a college, and a decent character, or three persons to say he has; whereas what is condemned admits no

wait upon God for His blessing, which alone can prosper, and this is as compatible with dependence on God's *grace*, as the culture of the soil and the scattering of the seed is with dependence on His *providence*.

I perceive that, whereas I intended only a few short notes, I have been drawn out to write a long letter; I shall now close, leaving you to have the last word, if you please, before going to press.

If you like, by the way, you may answer to our readers the following queries:—

I.—Where was the Church of God in England at the time of the Reformation?* and was that Church identified with the use of creeds, and an ordained ministry separate from the people? If so, are you not separatists from the Church?

II.—How are teachers appointed among you?† Is it competent to any one who feels he has the gift to stand up and minister in the word, and then if he teach Socinianism how can you consistently silence him? May he not *say*‡ he speaks in the Spirit as well as you; and thus are not all your meetings for worship and edification liable to become arenas of controversy? And

ministry but that which flows from the gift, and presence, and power of the Holy Ghost. Which is most *scriptural*?

* Scattered by the wickedness of men and the unscriptural intervention of princes, having been never in Saxon England founded on any true basis, it was buried under the heaps of Popery, from which it never half emerged.

† As in the Ephesians, Christ gave some apostles, some prophets, some pastors and teachers. What passage warrants their appointment by men?—"Let two or three speak," says the Apostle, "and let the rest judge."

‡ The Socinian, as well as the Church of England, so called, is to be judged by the word of God. "If a man come and bring you not this doctrine, neither receive him into your house, nor bid him God speed." The writer seems to forget that there is a word of God by which what men say, and all their pretensions to the Spirit, or to be the Church of God, are to be judged of.

III.—Is it a hindering of the Spirit of God to provide against this confusion by submitting the pretensions of gifted persons* to such an officer in the Church as Titus, appointed “to set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city” (Titus i. 5)? And,

IV.—Pray who is this officer among you?

A clear and *concise* answer to these questions will I am sure be acceptable to all our readers.

Praying that in these times of temptation through division, God may render the perusal of this correspondence (so humble at least on my part) profitable to His children,

I remain, my dear sir,

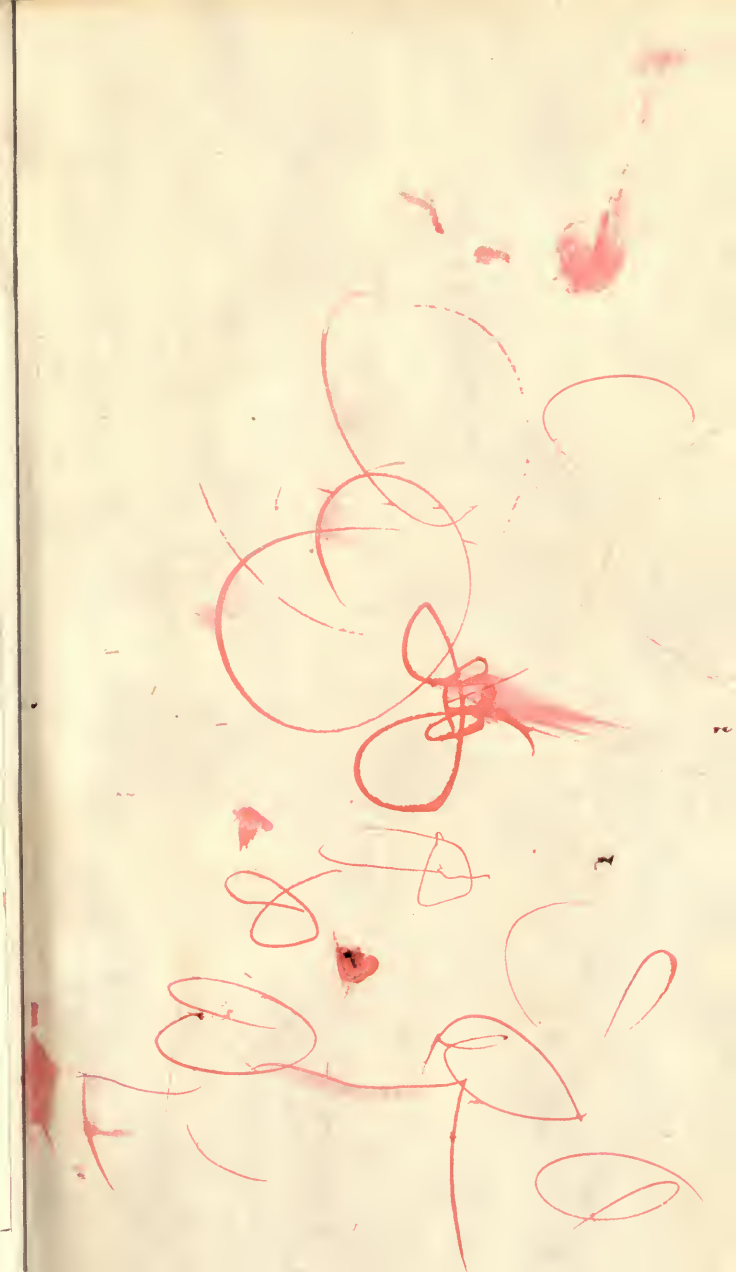
Yours in Christian truth and love,

JAMES KELLY.

* It was not to such an officer that this task is allotted in the word of God. Next I deny that Titus was any constituted officer in the Church, or other than a temporary delegate of the Apostle. The 20th of Acts proves that all application of the title of diocesan episcopacy to Timothy is utterly false, for the Apostle puts the elders on their own responsibility, without the smallest reference, and to the exclusion of any such officer. Such delegate of apostolic authority does not exist, because the Apostle is not here to delegate him, whatever the various measure of gift may be. Episcopal pretension to it is to be avoided for a very simple reason, that the power does not exist, and the kingdom of God is in power. If those who are called bishops in the Establishment, or in Popery, examine the qualifications and source of mission of Timothy and Titus as given by the apostles, a very small share of modesty, not to say of truth, would make them resign all pretensions to being in the same position. Their service after all was very different in its character, but in both instances temporary. Do the archbishops or bishops seriously pretend to confer the Holy Ghost on men marked out by prophecy, when a bishop named by the prime minister is consecrated? It is serious trifling with these subjects—a grave thing to pretend to give, or to have received, the Holy Ghost, and above all to take one's place in the Church of God as doing so. I tremble in thinking of the responsibility; and the facts—the Lord keep me from judging.

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